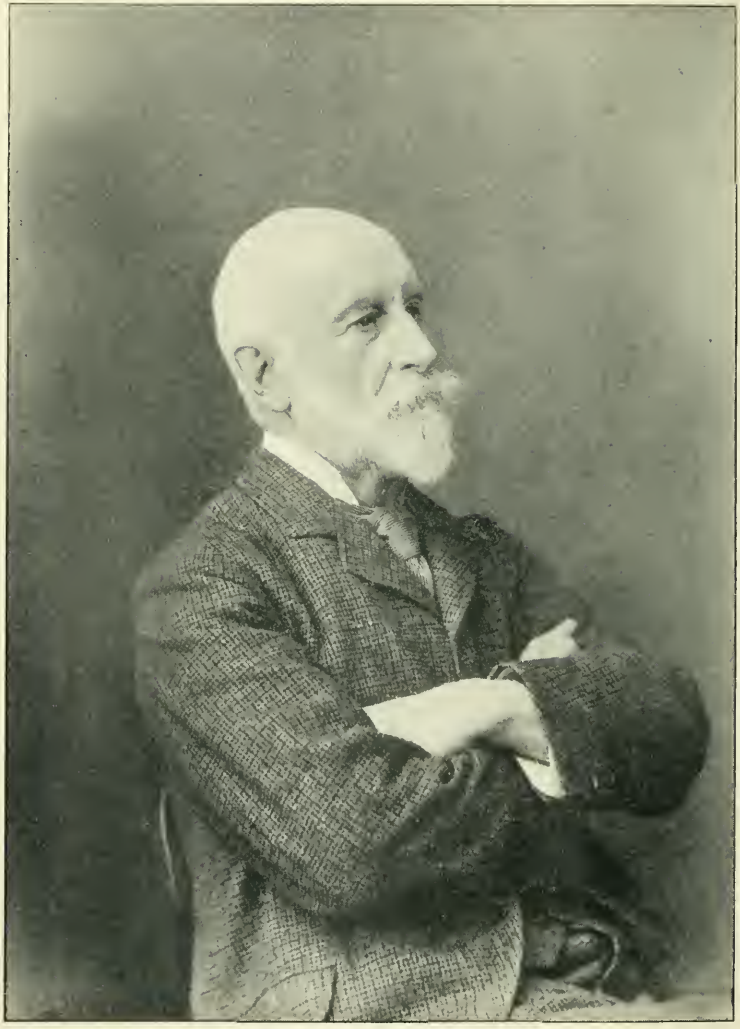
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/workplayofgovern00pres

The Work and Play of A Government Inspector



W. H. Waterfield, Photographer.]

The Work and Play of A Government Inspector

BY

HERBERT PRESTON-THOMAS, C.B.

(LATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD INSPECTOR FOR THE SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT; MEMBER OF THE ALPINE CLUB)

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BURNS, M.P.

PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

William Blackwood and Sons
Edinburgh and London
1909

PREFACE.

LIBRARY SETS

The writer of this interesting and discursive book was until recently a member of that important branch of the Civil Service which keeps watch and ward over the million of men, women, and children in Great Britain who are dependent upon the rates and taxes for their maintenance.

Fifty years ago, when Mr Preston-Thomas entered the service of the State, the new Poor Law had been in operation a quarter of a century. When he had completed his official career, three generations had been the witnesses of its humane development, its increasing social benefit, and its occasional abuse. But on the eve of his retirement the new Poor Law of 1834 had, after seventy-five years of trial, become the old Poor Law of 1909; and what was regarded as almost perfect and final in 1834 was to be subjected to a searching investigation at the hands of another Royal Commission. The monumental Report of 1834, and the system of public benevolence which

DEC 16 1940
HARDING

it inaugurated, have been the means of humanising to an enormous extent the apparatus and method of local charity and of medical provision for the dependent poor, upon whom the lot of life's adversity has fallen. Measured either by its aggregate expenditure in millions sterling (which since 1834 amounts to some £600,000,000), or in cost per head of the recipients, no country in the world is so generous towards its indigent and sick, the total annual expenditure having risen in sixty years from some 5¾ millions to over 15 millions, representing in cost per head an increase from less than £6 to over £16. But mere benevolence, whether on the part of the State or of the individual, is not necessarily the wisest charity. It is a commonplace that charity ill-regulated often creates more hardship than it relieves; and unless the permanent improvement of the recipient is kept constantly in view, experience proves that charity curses him who receives as much as it disappoints him who gives; and it may be said that the enormous expansion of State benevolence, divorced apparently from any permanent remedial effect, was one of the significant facts which led to the recent inquiry whether the Poor Law of 1834 was or was not adapted to the changed industrial and social conditions of the present day.

That those conditions have changed enormously nobody will deny; but great as they have been

during the past fifty or sixty years, it is well that in our consideration of them, and in the conclusions at which we arrive, we should not lose touch with the actual facts and figures. For example, in 1849 the mean number of paupers of all classes was 1,088,659, or 62.7 per 1000 of the population; in 1908 the number was 898,474, or 25.7 per 1000. Again, in 1849 there were 133,513 indoor paupers (excluding lunatics), or 7.7 per 1000 of the population, whereas in 1908 this number had risen to 269,936, which represents again 7.7 per 1000, and this in face of the enormous advance in the humane treatment and nursing of our sick poor, and in the comfort and scientific equipment of our Poor Law infirmaries.

But while the number of our indoor poor has for many reasons remained practically stationary, the number of outdoor paupers has, over the same period, decreased from 54.4 per 1000 to 15.4.

Figures, however, are themselves apt to mislead, especially where the seeker after truth has a pet theory which requires careful nurture, and it may be instructive to those who are prone to gloomy views to note that of the 269,936 indoor paupers to whom I have above referred, only 46,135 (excluding lunatics and casual paupers), or 1.3 per 1000 of the population, were adult and able-bodied, and only some 9000 were able-bodied men in health; whilst among the 539,710 outdoor paupers the adult able-bodied numbered

65,040, of whom only 14,228 were men, and of these 8569 were relieved on account of their own sickness, accident, or infirmity.

There is, of course, another aspect of the case—the cost. The total annual expenditure on the relief of the poor, as already pointed out, has risen from some $5\frac{3}{4}$ million pounds in 1849 to over 15 millions in 1908; but if we gauge the increase of the wealth of the country merely by its increase in rateable value—probably a very inadequate test — we find that the expenditure in 1908 represents an average rate of 1s. 5d. in the pound, as against 1s. $8\frac{1}{2}$d. in 1849.

But the problem of the Poor Law is much more than a question of statistics. Behind the facts and figures marshalled by the patient investigation of succeeding generations, pondered over by the social reformers, and often despaired of by the politician and the statesman, there lurks the elusive, intangible human element which runs counter to our theories, gets athwart our aims and ideals, and renders abortive the best intentioned of our remedies. For the disease of poverty is not merely an ailment of the body politic, due to economic and extraneous causes, —it is too often a failing of the mind, a weakness of the spirit, a shrinking of the soul, a corrosion of character, a loss of will in the individual, and often lack of moral courage in the counsellors and governors of the community.

A perusal of this book will convey to its readers

how great and difficult is the problem of modern poverty, how dangerous will be the choice of any step that fails to give greater prominence to prevention than to meretricious palliation, which leaves untouched those causes, the removal of which deserves our attention, and should command our energies.

JOHN BURNS.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	APPOINTMENT TO PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—CHARLES GREVILLE	1
II.	ARTHUR HELPS — LORD PALMERSTON — LORD GRANVILLE'S VERSES—HENRY REEVE	6
III.	REV. W. HARNESS — BAYLY AND COUNCIL WORK — SIR E HARRISON — THE JERSEYMEN'S DINNER — THE *TRENT* AFFAIR—HIGH SHERIFFS—CATTLE PLAGUE	16
IV.	LITERARY WORK—'LIFE OF COLUMBUS'—A BARMAID SHOW —THE *MORNING POST*—ROYAL ENCOURAGEMENT—A THEOLOGICAL EXCURSUS—'CRICKETERS IN COUNCIL'	26
V.	SIMON AND LOWE AND PUBLIC HEALTH	40
VI.	FORMATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—STANSFELD AND LAMBERT	49
VII.	DRAMATIC CRITICISM—AMATEUR MUSIC—ROYAL ACADEMY—CHRISTIE'S	58
VIII.	OBER-AMMERGAU PASSION PLAY, 1870 AND 1900	70
IX.	MOUNTAINEERING—FINSTERAARHORN—THE IMSENG MURDER —STEIN ALP DANCING	76
X.	MOUNTAINEERING—THE CAPUTSCHIN—VIOLA PEAKS—ACCIDENT—HADOW—MOORE	86
XI.	MOUNTAINEERING—TYROL—MUSIC—GIRL-PORTER—CRISTALLO ASCENT	100
XII.	SWISS TRAVEL—COOK'S TOURISTS—HOTEL-BOOKS—MUSICAL FESTIVAL	111
XIII.	ELBERFELD RELIEF SYSTEM	119
XIV.	JOURNALISM—IMPERIALISTS AT CHISLEHURST—THE PRINCESS OF WALES AT MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE — THE SHAH OF PERSIA — AMSTERDAM RIOTS — 'THE CHURCH AND THE LAND'	128

XV. PUBLIC HEALTH — MARGATE SEWERAGE — SANDRINGHAM — CHOLERA — SMALL-POX — NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE—JAPANESE COMMISSIONER . . . 141

XVI. METROPOLITAN WATER-SUPPLY — PLAGUE OF EELS — PROPOSALS FOR PURCHASE 153

XVII. ADULTERATION — EVIDENCE BEFORE SELECT COMMITTEE — VACCINATION — 'ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA' — DR RUSSEL WALLACE 162

XVIII. HUNGARY—TRANSYLVANIA—THE GREEK CHURCH — GOVERNMENT FARMS—GIPSIES—JEWS 171

XIX. HUNGARY—DE LESSEPS AND PARISIAN JOURNALISTS—CARPATHIAN WATERING-PLACE—DUEL—ICE-CAVERN . . 186

XX. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—DYNAMITE OUTRAGE—SIR HUGH OWEN — LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT — MARGARINE — AMATEUR LAW-MAKING 195

XXI. ASCHROTT'S 'ENGLISH POOR-LAW SYSTEM'—TOYS FOR WORKHOUSE CHILDREN—A PAUPER COOK—BATHING INSTRUCTIONS 204

XXII. EPIDEMICS—INFLUENZA—CHOLERA PREVENTION—THE *TIMES* AND QUARANTINE—HUMOUR OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS—ABOLITION OF QUARANTINE . . . 212

XXIII. APPOINTMENT AS GENERAL INSPECTOR—THE EASTERN COUNTIES—FIRST IMPRESSIONS—WORKHOUSES—LADY VISITORS 223

XXIV. BOARDS OF GUARDIANS — ESSEX AGRICULTURE — AN INSPECTOR'S DIFFICULTIES—KING EDWARD'S SUGGESTION—CLASSIFICATION IN WORKHOUSES—OFFICIAL INQUIRIES—A THREE-CORNERED DUEL 235

XXV. REVIEWING — MINOR POETS — A WOULD-BE LAUREATE—BATHOS — MURRAY AND LEIGHTON — RUSSIAN PRISONS—WELSH CELEBRITIES 251

XXVI. THE SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT—POOR-LAW ADMINISTRATION —THE DOINGS OF A TIGER — ABUSE AND GRATITUDE—STORIES OF BOARD MEETINGS 266

XXVII. WORKHOUSES—MANSLAUGHTER—THE IMBECILES—A SHREWD LUNATIC — A SYMPATHETIC J.P. — THE CHILDREN — SCATTERED HOMES — BOARDING-OUT — WOMEN GUARDIANS—WORKHOUSE DIETARIES 278

XXVIII. CLARET VINEYARDS OF THE GIRONDE—OYSTER-CULTURE OF ARCACHON—VIVISECTION 294

XXIX. CONSUMPTIVES AT DAVOS—FIREWORKS AT FLORENCE CATHEDRAL—THE OCTROI AT BOLOGNA—CANTONAL ASSEMBLY OF APPENZELL 309

XXX. VAGRANTS — A TRUDGE WITH A TRAMP — PRISONS AND WORKHOUSES — POACHING — A CLERICAL CASUAL — A CLEVER IMPOSTOR—"HOLLOW-ROOFED JACK" . . 321

XXXI. INQUIRY AS TO VAGRANCY IN SWITZERLAND — HELP TO WORK-SEEKERS—FORCED LABOUR FARMS . . . 335

XXXII. THE VAGRANCY COMMITTEE—ITS RECOMMENDATIONS—SWISS AND ENGLISH PRISONS—PRINCETOWN . . . 344

XXXIII. EXTENSION OF SERVICE—PROGRESS IN DISTRICT—PUBLIC INQUIRIES—PLAGUE OF INSPECTORS—RETIREMENT . 355

XXXIV. THE WEST OF ENGLAND—EXETER CATHEDRAL—PERKIN WARBECK—A DRAMATIC SITUATION—BISHOPS AND DEANS —DEVON DIALECT—CORNISH CHARACTERISTICS . . 366

INDEX 385

The Work and Play of A Government Inspector.

CHAPTER I.

APPOINTMENT TO PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE— CHARLES GREVILLE.

Leslie Stephen once declared that he did not mind writing books, but that he felt ashamed of publishing them. It was one thing to send a letter to a friend, but to go to the world at large and say, "Come, buy my remarks," seemed to him to show a want of modesty and even of common propriety. The same sort of feeling is intensified in my case. Yet, when it was suggested to me by Mr John Burns that nearly half a century in the Civil Service must have shown me a good deal of things which do not come in the way of most men, and which might be worth description, I could not resist an impulse to put some of my experiences on paper, leaving it to an expert to decide whether they should attain the dignity of print.

It was towards the end of the year 1859 that, fresh from Marlborough, I distinguished myself by gaining the first place in a competition held by the Civil Service

Commissioners for a clerkship in the Privy Council Office. Frankness compels me to add that the two other nominees (required by the regulations to make up the prescribed number of three) may possibly have been the special couple known as the "Treasury Idiots," who could never pass anything, and were sent up again and again to give a walk-over to any Minister's protégé able to reach the standard of minimum qualifications. At any rate, they could barely read or write, and so I found myself entitled to a desk in Downing Street.

The Council Office was certainly not hard-worked, except in connection with some special emergencies. Ordinarily it had little to do except to carry out the formalities connected with the submission to the Queen, at Councils held every six weeks or so, of Orders prepared by the Admiralty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and other departments. These had been for the most part already printed, and my chief occupation for two or three wearisome years was to copy them into a huge Register, thus turning correct print into probably incorrect manuscript.

It was also part of my duties to examine the entries made in the same book by a predecessor whom Eton and Cambridge had not disabused of the notion that "separate" ought to be spelled with an "e" in the middle. It happened that this particular word recurred with abominable frequency in the numerous Orders submitted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the constitution of new parishes, and I shudder to think of the hundreds of "seperates" which I converted with knife and pen into "separates." The tread-mill would have been a relief as not more monotonous, and as affording healthy exercise.

Now and then I was sent to hunt for some fact in the very old Registers, and in one I chanced to alight upon a curious sentence, which seemed to settle the origin of the word "blackguard," over which philologists had disputed. This was an Order in Council of Charles II., directing the Officers of the Board of Green Cloth to prevent the "Crowd of noisy and disorderly boys, commonly called the Black Guard," from congregating in the Mall. But such sparks of human interest were rare.

When I joined in 1859, Charles Greville had just ceased to be Clerk of the Council, although he now and then hovered about the office. He had held a unique position as a social and political go-between. "I have had," he once boasted, "within these few days, consultations on the most opposite subjects,—men coming to be helped out of scrapes with other men's wives, a grand bother about the Duke of Cambridge's statue in the House of Lords, a fresh correspondence with Lady Palmerston about the *Times* attacking her husband, communications with Cardinal Wiseman on ecclesiastical affairs, and so forth." He was an ardent Whig, and when the Tories came into office would never attend the Privy Councils, but invariably sent his deputy. Lord Derby was urged to take notice of this dereliction of duty, but answered contemptuously, "When I ring I never notice whether it is John or Thomas who brings up the coals." Upon this being repeated to Greville by a "damned good-natured friend," his wrath may be imagined. By a rather odd arrangement he shared a house with Lord and Lady Granville, and on one occasion, when some Cabinet secret had leaked out in the time of the Palmerston Ministry, an indignant correspondent wrote to the newspapers asking whether

this was due to the fact that Lord Granville and Charles Greville lodged together in Bruton Street.

Greville was a man of few friends; indeed the only intimate of his later years was the notorious Henry Lord de Ros, who has been described as a cynic "who never said to you an unkind thing or of you a kind one, whose slightest smile was a seductive fascination, whose loudest tone was a flute-like melody, and who had the sweetest possible way of insinuating his scorn of the human race." Lady Ellesmere used to deplore his influence over her brother, who stuck by him even after the card-playing exposure which caused his expulsion from society. Greville's own name had never been associated with any public scandal, and the only humiliation of his life was when he had written some foolish notes to the wife of a sporting baronet, who took the original revenge of reading his affectionate effusions in a stentorian voice to an appreciative audience of the fashionable frequenters of Rotten Row. Whether the husband had seized on the correspondence, or the wife had herself handed it over to him to make sport with, was a point left in doubt, but Greville felt acutely the ridicule thrown on him. It was almost as heavy a blow as the disappointment caused by his horse Alarm which he expected to win for him the Derby and twenty thousand pounds, but which threw its jockey, jumped over the rails, and scattered its master's hopes by a wild gallop on its own account over Epsom Downs.

His successor in the Clerkship of the Council was the Hon. W. L. (afterwards Earl) Bathurst, whom I recollect as a gouty old gentleman, concerning himself little with official matters. Still, on his visits to Whitehall he was invariably ready, even at some personal incon-

venience, to attach his signature to such papers as were put before him. When, however, it was proposed to give the department some active work in the supervision of the public health of the country, he made way for Arthur Helps, who had earned considerable literary fame, and had been recommended to Lord Palmerston by Macaulay as "one of the ablest men of the century."

CHAPTER II.[1]

ARTHUR HELPS—LORD PALMERSTON—LORD GRANVILLE'S VERSES—HENRY REEVE.

To those who recall the reputation of Arthur Helps among his cotemporaries, the comparative oblivion into which his works have fallen is incomprehensible. Ruskin once spoke of him as being, "like Plato and Carlyle, a true thinker," who had "become in some sort a seer, and must always be of infinite use in his generation." Yet even his 'Friends in Council,' that delightful symposium of brilliant talkers, is almost forgotten, and although the 'Spanish Conquest in America' is regarded as a standard work on the other side of the Atlantic, it is little read on this. Nor do many people remember that the author not only loomed large in literature, but that, as the trusted friend and constant correspondent of Queen Victoria, and intermediary between her Majesty and statesmen of all parties, he held a unique position in the political world.

His literary tastes had developed early. At Eton he was one of the founders of a school magazine number-

[1] Part of this chapter is taken from an Article which I contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* of July 1890, and I still have the letter in which Sir Henry Ponsonby told me with what interest Queen Victoria had read the account of her old friend the late Clerk of the Council.

ing among its contributors many clever boys who afterwards became famous men. While an undergraduate at Cambridge he wrote his 'Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd,' a collection of aphorisms which has several times been reprinted. Some of the "Thoughts" are excellent: "Most people seek the deep slumber of a decided opinion." "The extreme sense of perfection in some men is the greatest obstacle to their success." "The man of genius may be a guide, but the man of talents will be a leader." "Tolerance is the only real test of civilisation." "We must often consider, not what the wise will think, but what the foolish will say." Pithy maxims of this kind satisfy Chamfort's definition of an aphorism as "a product of the labour of a clever man intended to spare fools trouble." And though they are truisms they are by no means common-place.

Before his appointment to the Clerkship of the Council, Helps had some interesting experiences, for he worked under Mr Spring Rice (afterwards Lord Monteagle) as Commissioner for the relief of the famine-stricken Irish; and in the troublous times of 1848, when revolution was in the air and the claims of the Chartists were being wildly put forward, he took an active part with Charles Kingsley in the labour struggles in London. It was then that he contributed several papers to the series called 'Politics for the People,' which Kingsley edited under the name of "Parson Lot."

Helps's relations with Palmerston were of an intimate character. He was a frequent guest at Broadlands, and we used to hear from him many stories of the man who had taken a prominent part in British and foreign politics for more than half a century, and whose popularity

throughout the kingdom was unbounded. But we never heard the following anecdote, which is still being circulated everywhere in successive editions of Froude's delightful 'Oceana':—

"Sir Arthur Helps told me a story singularly illustrative of the importance which the British official mind has hitherto allowed to the distant scions of Oceana. A Government had gone out; Lord Palmerston was forming a new Ministry, and in a preliminary Council was arranging the composition of it. He had filled up the other places; he was at a loss for a Colonial Secretary. This name and that were suggested, and thrown aside. At last he said, 'I suppose I must take the thing myself. Come upstairs with me, Helps; when the Council is over, we will look at the maps and you shall show me where these places are.'"

This story shows the popular notion of the functions of a Clerk of the Council, and the only drawback is that it is absolutely apocryphal from beginning to end.

Froude's[1] memory must assuredly have played him some strange trick. In the first place, the Clerk of the Council never attends any meetings of the Privy Council at which the composition of Ministries is settled, for the excellent reason that such meetings are never held. In the second place, although Lord Palmerston filled several of the great offices of State, he never was Colonial Secretary. In the third place, he could not have said, "Come upstairs," because the Council chamber and the library at the Privy Council Office were alike on the first floor, and there was no reason why

[1] Accuracy was not Froude's strong point, and he was often flayed by the critics. Who was it that said his 'Nemesis of Faith' ought to be called 'Faith with a Vengeance'?

Minister and Clerk of the Council should ascend to the garrets.

But there is a stronger objection even than these, and it is furnished by the unassailable evidence of dates. Helps was not made Clerk of the Council until June 1860, when Lord Palmerston had already been Premier just a year, and there was, as a matter of fact, no change of Administration until Earl Russell succeeded him on his death in 1865. It is perfectly certain, then, that there was no meeting of any kind for arranging the places of a new Ministry, and it is difficult to imagine on what foundation this curious fiction was constructed.

Lord Palmerston and Helps had various characteristics in common, among which may be specially mentioned what many people consider a small matter, namely, their detestation of bad handwriting. Both wrote a particularly large and admirably legible hand; and I was shown by Helps—probably as a warning—a minute by the Premier dated October 1865, upon a despatch from an Embassy,—"This wretched copier seems to despise the ordinary correct formation of any single letter of the alphabet." "No steel pens and no hair up-strokes" was his direction to his staff.

But of mere peccadilloes he was tolerant. When he was at the Foreign Office some young gentlemen in the department fresh from Eton had amused themselves by "shining" (to use the school-boy phrase) some ladies who lived on the other side of the street, by catching the rays of the sun on a mirror and casting them so as to dazzle the damsels when they sat at their window. Their father complained to Lord Palmerston, whose minute was as follows: "The Secretary of State desires that the gentlemen in his department

will not cast disagreeable reflections on the ladies opposite."

When it was mentioned to him that Sir George Lewis, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, had contributed a paper to some periodical on "The Wakefulness of Geese," he remarked to Helps, "The Wakefulness of Geese? Why, the Opposition will think he means them, and (what is worse) they may say they are the geese that saved the Capitol."

When he was told that a friend was consulting a popular physician who had the reputation of being fond of experimenting on his patients, he observed, "I think that if you go to Dr H. you should have a superfluous stock of health for him to work upon." One is reminded of a well-known formula for suggesting something less than absolute faith in one's physician. "I do not imagine that the presence of Dr Hippocrates would seriously interfere with the curative processes of nature."

Lord Palmerston frequently had warm discussions with Helps, for he was always of the opinion, expressed in one of his speeches at Tiverton, that the man who agrees with everybody is not worth having anybody to agree with him. One subject over which they fought was the theory (originally started by an American lady in the middle of the last century, and frequently revived since) that the plays of Shakespeare were really written by Bacon, who passed them off under the name of an actor for fear of compromising his professional prospects and philosophic gravity. Palmerston to the last stuck to his Baconian belief, which Helps as vigorously opposed.

Helps used to declare Lord Palmerston to be the most perfect of hosts,—not worrying his guests, not

insisting on their seeing churches, or ruins, or model farms, or even pictures, but taking infinite pains to aid them in doing what they liked in their own way, and to adapt domestic arrangements so as to suit their particular plans. He appeared to be always ready to concern himself with any branch of human effort; and even to the end of his life he delighted in discoveries and inventions; though it is true that once, after enduring a flow of abstruse talk from a distinguished savant for a quarter of an hour, he exclaimed suddenly, "That is marvellously interesting, I must really get you to tell it to the Chancellor," and forthwith passed on his tormentor to Lord Westbury. And when, only an hour or two later, he had to listen to a very lengthy after-dinner speech from the same gentleman, who was then Astronomer-Royal, he plaintively asked whether there was not some confusion between Greenwich time and eternity. But as a rule he thoroughly enjoyed discussing new speculations and scientific projects. Helps wrote:—

"At a dinner-table, or in general society, Lord Palmerston, though always genial, did not always shine; but when you were at home with him, or when you were at work with him, or when you were walking with him, he was a charming companion. And what was said about his avoidance of the past, and his intense interest in the present and the future, is exactly true. I saw a great deal of him in the last ten years of his life, and only remember two or three instances when he went back upon the past; but as regards our hopes and prospects for the future he was always ready to discourse at large."

In his old age he did not give the idea of much natural eloquence, although on special occasions (as in

the celebrated Don Pacifico debate) he had shown himself capable of great things, and he was effective to the last. His one oratorical gesture was not imposing, for it seemed to consist in washing his hands with invisible soap, and somebody said that the Irish members were quite unable to understand what it represented.

A letter printed in Ashley's Biography shows how thoroughly Helps was appreciated by Lord Palmerston, who only a fortnight before his own death specially interposed on his behalf when the Council Office was overwhelmed by a sudden pressure of work.

Helps was the most charming of chiefs and the most genial of companions. He had seen many phases of society, and was acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men. Nobody told a good story more pleasantly, or enjoyed one more heartily, and in his relations with his subordinates officialism was entirely absent. They were always made welcome at his house, and he was delighted when one of them carried him off to some Bohemian haunt, to have a rather bad dinner in strange company, or to the "Kneipe" of a German club to see the jovial side of Teutonic life in London. Once it happened that a clerk who had received one or two remonstrances as to late arrival at the office was told, on again transgressing, that his chief had already visited his room. In some perturbation he went to his table, upon which he happened to have left the well-known work of reference called 'Men of the Time.' And the official reprimand communicated to him was on a slip of paper placed in this book. It merely contained the words, "It appears to the Clerk of the Council that Mr P. T. is a Man *after* his Time." Many of his minutes were in unconventional terms, apt to startle the official mind. Now and then he broke

into verse, and when Mr Knatchbull-Hugessen, who possessed a great faculty for rhyme, was Under-Secretary at the Home Office, a series of interdepartmental communications upon so prosaic a question as the drainage of Old Romney were all carried on in a metrical form. The final decision of the Privy Council was conveyed by Earl Granville, then Lord President, in the following lines, which after the lapse of more than forty years I still seem to see in his neat little handwriting :—

"Oh the bustle, oh the clatter!
What the devil is the matter?
Why try by more than mortal verse
To make a red-tape business worse,
And waste the Home-official ink?
Does ancient Romney really stink?
Why then, my Helps, prepare your pen,
Let engineers report again,
And by the force of letters tell
How much the law abhors a smell."

In those times the atmosphere of the Privy Council Office was decidedly literary. At its head was Helps, then at the height of his powers and of his fame. The Registrar of the Judicial Committee was Henry Reeve, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and (to quote the phrase used by the Public Orator, when Oxford gave him his D.C.L.) "republicâ literarum potentissimus."[1] Twenty years earlier he had been introduced by Greville to Barnes, then editor of the *Times*, and had soon become its chief writer on foreign politics, contributing regularly some three or four leaders a week. At one period his articles had been so offensive to the Emperor

[1] It may have been at the same Commemoration that Sir Travers Twiss, when similarly honoured, was described in a string of superlatives ending with "doctissimus," to which a roar from the undergraduates added "et Traverstwissimus."

of the French that Lord Granville, then Foreign Secretary, expostulated with him strongly as to the danger of embroiling this country in a war with France. The result was that his tone became less provocative. He studied foreign politics as a science, formed his opinions rapidly, and stated them clearly. Above all, he had a profound belief in himself, and, as frequently happens, he succeeded in communicating this to others. He talked well, though, like Macaulay, he was too fond of monologue, and too regardless of the first syllable of the word conversation. His language was turgid, and when he translated de Tocqueville he rendered the little word "*puis*" by the phrase "When these preliminaries had been adjusted."[1] His nickname was Don Pomposo, and he was not popular, except perhaps at the meetings of that eclectic coterie known as The Club, where he may have been somewhat in awe of his fellow-members. His habitual assumption of omniscience was often found irritating beyond all bearing; and there is a story that Rogers, whom he asked to walk home with him from a dinner-party, snarled out "Walk home by yourself, sir; I am sure you will be delighted with your company." His contributors to the *Edinburgh Review* sometimes grumbled at the despotism he exercised, and it was rumoured that he was always ready to correct Max Müller's philology, or Owen's natural history. He was a good hater, and it is difficult to guess whether he detested Disraeli or Gladstone the more heartily. He early gave offence in high quarters by the part which he took in foreign politics, especially

[1] In this it may be admitted that he followed an illustrious precedent. When Peel took his double first-class at Oxford, the examination was mostly oral; and the large audience which thronged the hall was delighted when, in the famous passage beginning with "*suave mari magno*," he construed *suave* as "it is a source of gratification."

by his championship of the Danes against the Germans; and it is possible that to this was owing the fact that he was not appointed to the much-coveted Clerkship of the Council instead of Helps,—with whom, by the way, he was never on very cordial terms. His publication of the Greville Diaries created much stir in society, and he was blamed for the revelation of family secrets and the bringing to light of forgotten scandals. Abraham Hayward, in the *Quarterly Review*, compared the relative positions of Greville and Reeve with those of Bolingbroke and Mallet; and quoted Dr Johnson's story of the cowardly scoundrel who loaded a gun which he was afraid to fire off himself, so left a shilling to a beggarly Scotsman to pull the trigger after his death. It is fair to say, however, that although the first instalment of the Diaries would have been the better for considerable omissions, the second and third series were edited with proper regard to the susceptibilities which an unexpurgated version might have excited.

CHAPTER III.

REV. W. HARNESS—BAYLY AND COUNCIL WORK—SIR E. HARRISON—THE JERSEYMEN'S DINNER—THE TRENT AFFAIR—HIGH SHERIFFS—CATTLE PLAGUE.

One member of the Council Office staff in the early sixties was an interesting link with the past. This was the Rev. William Harness, who held the almost sinecure post of Receiver of Clergy Returns. From Harrow onwards he had been the friend of Byron (like him, he had been lame from childhood), who, as readers of Moore's Life will remember, would have dedicated 'Childe Harold' to him but for the fear that the public association of their names would injure him in his profession. He had been intimate with Wordsworth, Rogers, Tom Moore, and other celebrities, of whom he had plenty to say. He had written various books (including a 'Life of Shakespeare,' which went through six or seven editions), and was known as a brilliant contributor to the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine.* Even in his old age he was a popular preacher, and his admirers built for him the church of All Saints, Knightsbridge. He was particularly fond of the stage, and was much appreciated by both Mrs Siddons and Fanny Kemble. There was a tale that at a performance of "The School for Scandal" at Drury Lane, the screen was once thrown down too

soon, and Harness and the fair Fanny were displayed to an astonished audience seated together on a sofa. "I wonder what you were talking about?" asked a lady afterwards. "It was a chaste conversation coupled with fear," was Harness's reply. He used to tell some curious stories of his parishioners. One old woman was full of lamentations at her bitter lot, and when the curate represented to her that she had much to be thankful for, and that Providence had on the whole been very good to her,—"So He 'ave, sir, so He 'ave mostly, I don't deny it; but I sometimes think that He 'ave taken it out cruel in corns." Then he was attending upon a dying man whose wife began expatiating on her virtues as a model helpmeet. "Pretty well, Mary, pretty well," groaned a feeble voice from the bed; whereupon this paragon of affection furiously exclaimed, "You hold your tongue, Thomas, and get on with your dying." So, too, we heard of a bewildered clergyman who had been charged to console the last moments of a man reputed to be the greatest villain in the parish. "What did you say to him?" asked the vicar. "I told him that he would soon be in hell, and that he ought to be very thankful there was a hell for him to go to." This, by the way, recalls the rejoinder to the Nationalist who declared that the Saxons would never govern Ireland till they got Cromwell back from hell to do it for them. "Do you think he'd come?" said the Orangeman; "isn't he aisier where he is?"

Then there was Charles Villiers Bayly, a great authority on old silver and china, at whose little dinners at his rooms at the corner of Berkeley Square there was generally some lively talk. He was a nephew of Lady Jersey, the *grande dame* whose house used to

be a political centre at the time when the patronesses of Almack's were a power in the State, and who shared with her great rival, the Princesse de Lieven, the leadership of the fashionable world of London. Once when the Marquis d'Azeglio (then Italian ambassador), Helps, and I were dining with Bayly, he described to us a scene which he had witnessed at Lady Jersey's when Byron came to an evening party and was treated with such marked coldness by the assembled guests that the hostess asked her nephew to find out why they all turned their backs on the poet. It appeared that this was due to the first breath of a scandalous story which had become suddenly current as to Byron's treatment of his wife, though it is significant that the charge was not the particular one afterwards published by Mrs Beecher Stowe. Bayly, who was a curious old cynic, was also a fastidious *gourmet;* and once when Helps, who never knew or cared what he was eating or drinking, said something as to dinners being a nuisance, he burst out with "My dear Helps, I entirely disagree. I would rather lose a friend than a dinner, for if I lose a friend I can go down to the club and get another, whereas if I lose a dinner the misfortune can never be retrieved, for nobody can eat two dinners in the same day." When Prince Salm-Salm was made an honorary member of the Travellers', somebody asked whose son he was? "Prince Psalms?" said Bayly; "why, of course he must be King David's son." "And I suppose he comes from Sing-Sing," was the comment of a New Yorker to whom the joke was repeated.

It now and then happened that some official business had to be transacted late at night at the Council Office, and the official staff used to dine there while waiting

for a telegram from Lord President or Prime Minister. On such occasions the party was always very genial, and Helps used to pour out a wonderful fund of anecdotes from his very retentive memory. It was a pleasant trait in his character that he was as brilliant for the benefit of ordinary persons as for that of exalted personages.

One official dinner was preceded by an incident which seemed likely to throw a gloom over it. The department was nominally responsible for the Government of the Channel Islands; and the Parliament of Jersey sent over a deputation to the Privy Council as to some legislative measure of which the Home Secretary had refused to recommend the confirmation. It was decided to entertain them at a banquet in the Council Chamber, and it happened that they were previously received by Sir Edmund Harrison, the Deputy Clerk of the Council. When the head of the deputation was introduced, as (let us say) M. de St Helier, with a statement of his insular dignities, some malicious demon impelled Harrison, who was really the pink of politeness, to greet him with "I have so long been familiar with your name that I am delighted to know you personally, and I only wish that we could have asked Madame de St Helier to accompany you." On this the gentleman addressed drew himself up and scowled; all the Jerseymen looked at each other; and it was evident that something had gone wrong somewhere. Afterwards we learned what that something was, namely, that about a month previously the lady in question had eloped with an officer, and that her husband had just commenced proceedings for a divorce. Of course neither Harrison nor any of the rest of us had heard a whisper of the affair, but the wretched man

imagined that he was being insulted. Certainly, in the circumstances, the expression of regret had been particularly unlucky; but I believe that its innocent character was afterwards explained: at any rate, we had a very jovial dinner with the Jerseymen, who went back well pleased with their treatment.

During the American Civil War the Council Office was aroused from its usual placidity by the seizure of the Confederate Envoys, Slidell and Mason, on board a British liner. This act was clearly a violation of international law, but at that time public feeling in the North ran very hotly against us, and the fact that Congress passed a vote of thanks to Captain Wilkes, who had made the seizure, seemed to show that it was the deliberate intention of the Americans to provoke hostilities with this country. Prompt measures were therefore taken. Troops were despatched to Canada, and the export of arms and ammunition from the United Kingdom was prohibited. It was this prohibition that the Privy Council had to enforce, and the department was for some time inundated with applications for exceptions in particular cases. Special investigations as to all proposed shipments were necessary; and detectives had to be employed. It will be remembered that Lord John Russell's despatch, as submitted to the Queen, was so peremptory and defiant that it would undoubtedly have been resented by a proud and sensitive nation. But at the suggestion of the Prince Consort it was remodelled, and while it lost nothing in firmness its tone was moderated. This change was one of the last acts of the Prince, who had already been smitten with his fatal illness; and, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, it had the effect of averting

war between the two countries. The envoys were liberated, the dispute was at an end, and the prohibition was rescinded. But our department had information as to considerable quantities of arms and ammunition which had been prepared for exportation as "hardware," and which we should have taken measures for seizing if war had been declared.

Sir Edmund Harrison, who was for some years my immediate chief, was one of the best men of business I have ever known; and he held promptitude in the highest estimation among official virtues. Even in periods of sudden and heavy pressure of work, he insisted on every letter being dealt with on the day of its receipt, whereas I have heard of some departments of the Civil Service in which "dulce et decorum est pro patriâ morari" is apparently the motto, and pedantry tempered by procrastination is the practice. I have not the least doubt that if it had fallen to the Privy Council, instead of the Foreign Office, to manage the case of the Alabama, the delay which allowed her to leave the Mersey would have been avoided, and England would have been saved some millions in hard cash, to say nothing of escaping the hatred of a generation of Americans.

Another sort of work which annually broke the monotony of our usual routine was that connected with the appointment of High Sheriffs of Counties. A large number of the gentlemen nominated for this honourable but very costly[1] office desire to escape it, and it is the

[1] The sum which a High Sheriff had to pay out of his own pocket was stated by a Parliamentary Committee to vary from £300 in Essex to over £1400 in Lancashire, not including the outlay for entertainments, such as Sheriff Balls and Dinners, which he was expected to give. The burden on landowners, in times of depressed agriculture and lowered rents, was often oppressive. In the course of fourteen years no less than twenty-one gentlemen placed on the roll for an eastern county petitioned the Privy

duty of the department to sift their excuses. Cases are known in which nominees, whose physical inability to act as Sheriff has been testified by medical certificate, have nevertheless been heard of in the first flight of some of the best runs of the season. The plea of insufficient means sometimes requires delicate investigation, and one man who asks for exemption on the ground that the interest of his mortgages exceeds his rents, and that he has no other income, is found to be keeping a pack of hounds. One nominee is a candidate for a seat in the House of Commons, and fears that the election will come in his year of office, in which case he would be ineligible. Another frankly represents that he is not on such terms with county society as to make his appointment desirable; and it turns out on inquiry that he has married his cook. Another is the claimant of a disputed baronetcy, and as he absolutely refuses to recognise any warrant addressed to him without the title, and as the case must not be prejudged, the difficulty is only surmounted by inducing somebody else voluntarily to take his place. One nominee is a Nonconformist, and is horrified at the notion of having to accompany the judges to church; while another has conscientious scruples as to capital punishment, and strongly objects to being even nominally concerned in carrying out the extreme penalty of the law. When all these pleas have been sifted it is decided, at a dinner given by the Lord President of the Council to the Cabinet, which of the three persons nominated for each county shall be appointed. The names are inscribed on a long parchment roll which is submitted to the

Council for exemption, and many of them were made to serve against their will. Even the *nouveaux riches* no longer welcome the office as they did when it was the chief passport to county society.

Sovereign to be "pricked" with a gigantic pin. This practice is said to have been originally intended to insure impartiality by letting the pin fall by chance on any one of the three names. But in modern times the element of uncertainty has been done away with, and the parchment is pierced opposite the name marked at the Lord President's dinner. This pin-thrust is the authority for the issue of the warrant of appointment.

The outbreak of Cattle Plague in 1863 threw upon the Council Office an enormous amount of business for which its small staff was quite unprepared. But no other department of the Government was then charged with the duty of looking after such matters, and the rapid progress of the plague (of which the entire cost to the country was afterwards officially calculated as having been over five millions sterling) soon made it clear that unless vigorous measures were promptly carried out everywhere, all the herds would be swept away. So an Act was passed giving despotic powers to the Privy Council; Orders were issued for the compulsory slaughter of infected beasts, with compensation, and were carried out as efficiently as the local machinery (before the establishment of County Councils) would allow. It took about a couple of years to stamp out the disease, and Helps had the satisfaction of organising a new department to deal with such matters in future. The Treasury recognised the extra work which had been thrown on the staff of the Council Office, and we all received liberal grants of money.

There was no part of Helps's duties which delighted him more than that relating to animals. He was always deeply impressed with the cruelties wantonly inflicted on the brute creation, and his genuine indignation at some case of barbarity often startled his friends,

who were unprepared for so furious an outburst from such a quiet nature. One of his latest works, 'Animals and their Masters,' was devoted to this question, and as Chairman of the Transit of Animals Committee he had the satisfaction of proposing to the Government the measures which have since prevented a recurrence of at any rate the worst tortures in the carriage of cattle by sea and by land.

He had to endure one special trial. Some thirty or forty years ago a little old lady, trimly dressed in decent black, with a child-like face flanked by cork-screw curls, used to haunt Whitehall in order to convert official people to a brand-new religion which she had invented, and of which she announced herself to be the high priestess. She circulated among public men, fortnightly or monthly, printed reports of the dogmas revealed to her, and more than one Under-Secretary fled incontinently when the redoubtable Mrs Cottle swooped upon him from a Downing Street doorway, while in most departments the hall-porters had strict orders to prevent her incursions. What the Cottle Church was, nobody could quite make out. But a prominent figure in it was Mrs Cottle's milkman, who bore the name of Job, and whose grey mare was somehow associated in her mind with the White Horse of the Revelation. Her tracts, on which she plaintively declared that she was expending all her substance, were extraordinary productions, and were largely composed of Biblical references placed in parentheses, thus giving the impression that if she remembered any word as having been employed in the Bible, she felt obliged to note chapter and verse by way of authority for its use. Once she obtained access to Helps, who was perfectly civil to her, although her new creed had nothing to do

with the Privy Council, and, moreover, was a jumble of wild incoherence. But having made the acquaintance of so eminent a disciple, she was always wishing to complete his conversion. In vain she was denied admittance. She waylaid the unfortunate Clerk of the Council at every opportunity, and for some time he could never turn a corner without a fearful apprehension that the terrible Mrs Cottle would dart out and resume her usual discourse on the Book of Job and The White Horse. What a Suffragette that woman would have made!

CHAPTER IV.

LITERARY WORK — 'LIFE OF COLUMBUS' — A BARMAID SHOW — THE *MORNING POST* — ROYAL ENCOURAGEMENT — A THEOLOGICAL EXCURSUS — 'CRICKETERS IN COUNCIL.'

It will be seen from the foregoing sketch that the staff of the Council Office had plenty of leisure, and I endeavoured to turn some of mine to account by writing. Thomas Hood the younger was then editing a modest periodical called *Saturday Night*, and when he accepted a story, for which I received the sum of fifteen shillings, I felt that a career of fame and fortune was open to me. But *Saturday Night* soon died, perhaps killed by my contribution. The editors of *Chambers's Journal* and *Once a Week* also published one or two of my attempts, but, unluckily, the proportion of rejections was considerable, and I used now and then to go to the office at a specially early hour in order that my fellow-clerks might not jeer at the return of the manuscript which I feared to find on my table. Helps, however, warmly sympathised with my aspirations, and, with infinite good-nature, he handed over to me a delightful piece of work which, more than anything else, had the effect of giving me a lifelong attachment to literature.

In his 'Spanish Conquest in America' he had told

the story of about two-thirds of the career of Columbus, and the publishers had come to the conclusion that this might well be expanded into a complete biography. Helps asked me to write the necessary additions under his editorship, and with the confidence of youth I accepted the task. It was not a particularly easy one, for it involved considerable research at the library of the British Museum, and it was necessary to some extent to imitate Helps's style in order that my part of the work should not contrast too conspicuously with his admirably flowing and picturesque paragraphs. In both respects I had an excellent literary lesson. My hunts among old authorities taught me a good deal. For example, I discovered the astonishing inaccuracy of translators in the matter of figures. I found that all previous biographers had stated, with reference to the early voyages of Columbus, that he had visited a coast (unnamed) in the North of Europe, where "the tides were so great as to rise and fall twenty-six fathoms"—*i.e.*, 156 feet. This seemed to me incredible, so I wrote to the Hydrographical department of the Admiralty for information. I was told in reply that the range of tide in the seas of northern Europe is from seven to less than twenty feet, and I could get no clue to the coast in question. So it occurred to me to refer to the earliest version of the phrase used by the great navigator himself, which I found to be *venti sei braccia*—*i.e.*, twenty-six cubits (not fathoms), or about forty feet. This suggests that the voyage was to the Bristol Channel, where alone the tide reaches that limit. But it is curious that biographer after biographer should, without question, have been content to assume that Columbus had met with a natural phenomenon which is to be found nowhere in the world.

It was satisfactory to have proof that my endeavour to imitate Helps's style was fairly successful. The *Athenæum*, in an elaborate review, quoted long paragraphs of mine (as Helps's) with much approbation. Other critics were equally flattering, and I was encouraged to hope that work on my own account might in future find favour.

Soon I had a piece of luck which brought me into association (maintained for many years) with a great newspaper. Purely by chance, in the dull season of 1870, I sent to the *Morning Post* the following letter, which had such a powerful effect on my future pursuits that I hope I may not be thought unduly egotistical for now republishing it :—

The Barmaid Show.

"Sir,—Somebody once said to Charles Lamb, 'What on earth makes you stay in London in September, when town is so empty?' 'I find it much fuller than the country,' was the answer of the essayist, for whom 'the sweet shady side of Pall Mall' had more charms than any 'babbling of green fields,' and who used to take pride in declaring himself a Cockney of the Cockneys. Well, sir, when I found myself compelled, by an unpleasant concatenation of circumstances, to pass the present month within the sound, if not of Bow Bells, at least of the Westminster Chimes, I consoled myself with that saying of Charles Lamb's, and came up by the limited mail with even some pleasurable anticipation. At the club, I thought, I shall be sure to find some friends who have fled to London to escape their wives, or rheumatics, or sporting stories, or some of the other ills with which country-houses abound. We shall

be companions in misfortune, we shall fraternise. Major Growler, who usually hovers about the door of the morning-room in order that he may possess himself of each successive edition of the newspapers, and sit upon them, and who has taken a fancy for my pet corner in the dining-room, is sure to be salmon-fishing in Norway. The two worst bores of last season are in Switzerland, accumulating boring material for next year's campaign. We shall at least have room to breathe, our society will be small but select, and September in London will not be so bad after all.

"So much for fancy; now for the reality. Club shut up, smell of paint everywhere; all the streets blocked for Macadamnable operations; all my friends' houses with newspapers pasted over their windows from attics to basement; not a solitary acquaintance to be found. Yes, one: but he is just recovering from smallpox, and I don't dare to go and see him without being previously revaccinated. Impossible, for my doctor is out of town. The loneliness is crushing. If I were not a philosopher I should be crushed. Being a philosopher, I reflect that, when Charles Lamb alluded to the comparative fulness of town, he was speaking not of society but of population. Society fails me. Let me try population. Population (I am told) is densest in the East. It used to be necessary, I believe, to send on relays of horses if you wanted to go to Bishopsgate. A hansom cabman whom I consulted was convinced that his horse could do it. He did it. The cabman charged me five shillings. I fancy he did me. But the result was that at seven o'clock last Thursday evening I found myself opposite the Great Eastern terminus at Shoreditch.

"There my attention was attracted by an excited crowd consisting of two men and a boy, who were gazing at a huge placard. I had seen successive *affiches* posted in Paris a fortnight ago; and my first idea was News of the War. It really referred to a very different contest—to one not of heroes but of heroines. It informed me that on Monday, the 5th instant, and during the week, the Great Barmaid Competition (I presume that the epithet 'Great' applied to the competition and not to the barmaids) would be held at the North Woolwich Gardens. That thirty barmaids would be on show. That prizes amounting, I think, in the aggregate to £300 would be given to the best barmaids. That the qualities desiderated in a barmaid were promptitude of service, modesty of demeanour, and neatness of dress. That each visitor would be supplied with a voting paper, to be given to the barmaid who, in his opinion, best fulfilled these conditions. That at the close of the competition a jury of twelve publicans would sit upon the voting papers and the barmaids, and award the prizes. Need I say that I took the first train for North Woolwich and felt the pride that Mr Stuart Mill assures us we ought to feel in becoming possessed of a new suffrage?

"In exploring an unknown country one's first care is to obtain information about it from previous travellers. A lovely and accomplished female was the only other occupant of my railway-carriage. Was it possible that she could have travelled in those regions of North Woolwich into which I was about to plunge? On inquiry, it appears that she knows them well. A sort of Cremorne? 'Just so,' she says, 'though (Lor' bless you) the company ain't up to the West-end cut. Wonderful lot of foreigners there. French and Germans by the

undred. Had a row or two when they first went to war, but had become sociable-like now. Precious rush this week after the barmaids, in spite of the wet weather. Rum thing it was to see what the public would run after. If the public want to look at barmaids, can't they look at Spiers & Pond's barmaids? But the North Woolwich barmaids are advertised, and Spiers & Pond's aren't, so the public come to look at the North Woolwich ones. So with Baby-Shows. If the public see a private baby, or hear a private baby, they get out of sight and hearing of that private baby as quick as they can. But advertise a collection of babies and the public crowd to see them.'

"While my fair neighbour has been discoursing after this fashion we have passed Stratford (where there is an agglomeration of worn-out carriages and engines—'ingens cui lumen ademptum,' as somebody said—which pleasantly proves that even the Great Eastern Railway Company considers it possible for rolling-stock to become too disreputable and rickety for use), and have arrived at the Eastern Bowers of Bliss, or, in point of fact, at the North Woolwich Gardens. A placard at the entrance of the dining-rooms, which announces that for the modest sum of two shillings 'every delicacy of the season may be had inside,' suggests to the comic man of a party that precedes me the inquiry 'Whether they mean to insinuate that there is any indelicacy outside?' and reminds me that the time for feeding has arrived. Accordingly I place myself under the protection of a waiter who is the very embodiment of Bishopriggs in Mr Wilkie Collins's 'Man and Wife,' and embark on 'every delicacy of the season.' A ribald person who is my *vis-à-vis* remarks that, so far as he can see, 'every delicacy consists chiefly of pickles.' But this is a libel.

The fare is by no means as bad as it might be; and when my next neighbour, a German, exhibits manners characteristic of the lower class of his countrymen, I am almost charmed into the notion that I am assisting at a Continental *table d'hôte*. Our dining-room is on the bank of the river; and the full moon which shines, though of course inferior to Mr Boucicault's moons, is yet a very creditable imitation of the theatrical article. A fringe of foliage skirts the shore, and the combined influence of trees, tide, and moonlight seems to produce a sentimental effect on several couples who are dotted about. Love, I observe, can disregard the influence of the goddess Cloacina, and the fact that the main drainage outfall is near, while much Thames mud is nearer still.

"The entrance to the Bowers of Bliss is certainly very pretty. You walk down an arcade of coloured lamps for about a quarter of a mile, and then you are in the thick of the fun and can inspect the amusements of the British public. The dancing-platform is crowded. At Cremorne Hoi Polloi dance, while Lord Verisopht and the other fashionables content themselves with looking on. But the East-enders differ from the East Indians. They don't appreciate the nautch, the delights of dancing by deputy, and the *dolce far niente*. With a stern sense of determination, and a noble disregard of ribs and elbows and shins, they plunge into the skittish schottische or the mazy Caledonians with an energy that does them infinite credit. The whole thing is decorous and dull in the last degree. French people are there by scores, but nothing reminds me of the Jardin Mabille or the Château des Fleurs. Next to the giddy dance, the most popular entertainment seems to

be a gigantic merry-go-round, worked by a steam-engine at a prodigious speed. On this terrible machine the East-enders, male and female, are whirled round till one becomes dizzy with looking at them. Shooting for nuts, punching the head of a lay figure specially constructed to try your strength of biceps, and receiving shocks from a galvanic battery, appear to be the other favourite amusements. We heard a lovely young person, who was undergoing this last torture, challenge a bashful young gentleman to bestow upon her an osculatory embrace—in short, as Mr Micawber would say, to kiss her. The youth was too bashful to refuse, and his trembling lips received an electric shock which delighted the spectators enormously.

"Shunning such allurements as these, we made our way to the 'Halls of Glittering Light,' where the *bonne bouche* of the entertainment—in point of fact, the Barmaid Show—was displayed. We found, what we might have expected to find, that the barmaids were in no respect different from other barmaids, except as regards good looks, in which they certainly manifested a decided inferiority. Thirty 'young ladies' were engaged in the competition, and among the thirty only two had any pretensions to personal attractions. Nearly all were being inanely chaffed by city 'gents,' and for the most part seemed to be answering the fool according to his folly. It was not an interesting exhibition, but it furnished a capital illustration of the art of putting things. Call it a public-house tap on a large scale, and nobody would go to it; call it a Barmaid Show, and all East London, to say nothing of France and Germany, rushed to the fore. But a tap-room, however gigantic, scarcely furnishes a theme which would interest your

readers, so here I abruptly end the account of my visit to the Far East without even hinting to what goddess of North Woolwich the apple was awarded by

"PARIS."

Astonishment was mingled with my delight when, side by side with a copy of the *Morning Post* in which this letter appeared, I found a note from the Editor thanking me for it, and inviting me to write leaders for the paper. I could not imagine why a would-be humorous description of a Barmaid Show had suggested to him that I was capable of producing the grave essays in three paragraphs by which public opinion was traditionally guided. He reminded me, however, that some months previously he had published a long letter of mine making suggestions for sweeping reforms in the Civil Service, and it seemed that my proposals had attracted so much attention in important quarters that he had then resolved to ask me to become a regular contributor. But this intention had been forgotten until my account of the Barmaids had recalled my name to his memory. The result was that I began to write for the paper pretty frequently; and one of my earliest efforts received very august approval.

It happened in October 1870 that the *Morning Post* obtained, before any of its contemporaries, information of the engagement of the Princess Louise with the Marquess of Lorne, and the Editor commissioned me to furnish a leader on the subject. My first step was to rush off to Helps to inquire whether the news was authentic; and I found that he had just received a letter from Queen Victoria (with whom for years he was in constant correspondence) in which her Majesty had expressed her hope that the announcement would be received with pleasure by the nation, and also that the

newspapers, if they praised a British match, would not take the opportunity to disparage the Germans. My talk with Helps gave me the key-note for my article; and when it was published on the following day, he called her Majesty's attention to it, telling her that it had been "written by one of his braves." The Queen responded with the words, "Mr Helps may tell 'one of his braves' that the Queen likes the article in the *Morning Post* the best of all. It is in accordance with the usual good taste of that paper." I need scarcely say that no praise could have been more welcome than this to a young writer.

Thenceforward my leading articles were numerous, and ranged over a vast variety of topics, from Prize-fighting to Public Health, and from Cricket to the Creed of Saint Athanasius. The last-named subject, by the way, was then being hotly fought over; for the Ritual Commissioners had just suggested the addition of an explanatory note to the effect that what are known as the damnatory clauses were not to be literally interpreted. This recommendation had aroused a tremendous hubbub. The newspapers were filled with letters from the opponents and from the supporters of the Creed; and stormy meetings were held in which its reputed authorship, the correctness of the received text, and the accuracy of the authorised translation were strenuously contested and enthusiastically supported. There was a renewal of the dispute between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians, which had long before been ridiculed by Boileau in the lines :—

> "Qui fit, dans une guerre et si triste et si longue,
> Périr tant de chrétiens, martyrs d'une dipthongue."

Nothing could reconcile the disputants. Without going so far as Thorold Rogers, who characterised the Creed

as a theological electioneering-squib, I anticipated what has been said by the present Bishop of Winchester (Dr Ryle), and pleaded for its elimination from the Liturgy. I urged that its authority is by no means weighty; that many of its dogmas are mere echoes of scholastic bickerings about non-essentials; while its anathemas are the bequest of an age when the Catholic Church held that salvation without her pale was absolutely impossible. Helps's History had told me that in the time of the Spanish conquest of America, even a man so large-minded as Las Casas observed of some of the natives whom the Spaniards had massacred after baptising them, that they were "the first of that nation who had ever entered Heaven." But the progress of modern thought has made us more tolerant, and as we do not now burn our theological opponents in this world, so we hesitate to pronounce their inevitable condemnation in the next. Hence it is that most laymen dislike the Creed, and that some Nonconformists inclined to join the Church of England are repelled by a formulary which in plain language condemns their co-religionists, dead and alive. This view has been put forward again and again at Church Congresses, yet still the conservatism of ecclesiastics is allowed to stand in the way of the practical reform of a substantial grievance. And when Stanley urged upon Disraeli that the Creed ought to be expunged from the Prayer Book, the Premier's reply was significant: "Mr Dean — no dogmas, no deans!"

A jump from theology to cricket was mainly due to the appointment to the Council Office of John Henry Ponsonby, fresh from the Harrow eleven, and a notable lob-bowler in the ranks of I Zingari, who also figured with much success in the Canterbury Week. We were

(and are) both members of the M.C.C., and managed to see a good deal of first-rate cricket at Lord's. In 1871 we embodied some of our experiences in a modest volume which, in humble imitation of Helps's popular work, we published under the name of 'Cricketers in Council. By Thomsonby.' It consisted of a series of essays on different parts of the game, followed by discussions supposed to be held in the smoking-room of a country-house during a cricket week. Cricket stories were told, cricket songs were sung (the best being by the Hon. Spencer Ponsonby[1]—now the Right Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane—the Founder of I Zingari); and a sort of Mr Winkle whom we introduced was much quoted in cricket circles. The little book had an unexpected success, and we made about £60 by it. Oddly enough, although published nearly forty years ago, it anticipated a good deal of recent criticism as to the curiously metaphorical language that characterises reports of cricket matches. It seems to be a point of honour with some of the exponents of this branch of journalism to refer to the players not by their names, but as the "New South Wales Trundler," the "Yorkshire Left-hander," or the "Warwickshire Timber-watcher," while a slow scoring batsman is a "Stone-waller," the ground is a "carpet," the good fieldsman's hands are "buckets," an easy catch is a "sitter," and so on. But this flowery phraseology is by no means new. As long ago as 1871 we wrote as follows:—

"Cricket, besides occupying a large place in periodical literature, has shown its vitality by creating a language for itself. And a very queer language it is. From the time of the Euphuists there have now and then arisen

[1] One of these, "The Cricketer's Carol," was last year published by Messrs Weekes & Co., of Hanover Street, W., with a tune of my own.

certain schools in literature manifesting the strongest dislike to calling a spade a spade. But it is odd to find that the same sort of periphrasis which styled a night-cap 'the innocent accomplice of falsehood,' and which sought out numberless roundabout expressions for the commonest things, is to be found in every cricket report. The ball is not the ball, but the 'leather,' or the 'circle'; the bat figures as the 'willow'; the stumps are the 'timber'; a ball hit into the air is a 'spoon,' unless it goes a long way, when it becomes a 'skyer,' or a 'slog'; a man who fails to score 'gets a duck's egg,' or (more usually) a 'duck,' and if he does so twice in one match the ciphers which stand against his name are invariably spoken of as 'spectacles.' If on the other hand he makes a hundred runs, he is said to 'complete the century.' You may find sentences like the following, 'The new trundler then put down a tice, almost a yorker, which the Surrey colt snicked cleverly through the slips for a single.' Really, if this sort of thing goes on, we must amend our dictionaries."

When this was written, cricket-reporting must have been in its infancy,[1] and it is remarkable that what the 'Cricketers in Council' contemptuously called "this sort of thing" has flourished and developed steadily until the present day. Of course the vocabulary has

[1] Nor did the compilers of books of reference know much about the game. In Webster's Dictionary, "Wicket-keeper" was defined as "the player in cricket who stands with a bat to protect the wicket from the ball," and "Long-stop" as "one who is set to stop balls sent a long distance." Even the author of a Treatise on Cricket, which used to be sold at the bookstalls, informed his readers that "each side appoints its own umpire, and *when his own party is at the wickets* he stands at the stumps beside the bowler, *when they are in the field* his place is at some distance in front and to the left or right of the batsman's wicket according to whether the latter be a right or a left-handed player." This was rather puzzling instruction for cricketing youth.

received numerous additions. We did not hear in the old times of "googlies" or "donkey-drops," those being modern terms applied to slow round-hand bowling like Mr Bosanquet's, which pitches high in the air and breaks considerably when it touches the ground, while "cow-shots," "rabbits," and "dollies" were terms unknown to us. Most of them are of doubtful derivation, and I suppose their origin could not easily be indicated more precisely than by the sort of reply given by a Lancashire professional when he was asked why a ball pitching just within the batting crease was called a "yorker." "Well, sir, what else could you call it?" he said; "it must be a yorker."

It is amusing to find that 'Cricketers in Council' has become a rarity in some demand among the collectors of old books on Cricket, and that, having been published at half-a-crown, it now figures in the catalogues of second-hand booksellers at about ten times its original price.

CHAPTER V.

SIMON AND LOWE AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

It has been already mentioned that on Helps's appointment to the Clerkship of the Council it was proposed to take some steps towards the establishment of an organisation for dealing with sanitary matters, and it fell to my lot to see something of its beginnings. Just before I entered the Council Office John Simon had become the medical adviser of the Government, and he has been rightly called, by one of his distinguished successors in the Presidency of the Royal College of Surgeons, "the creator of Sanitary Science in all its modern aspects, and one whose work has stimulated and guided the civilised world." It now seems almost incredible that until after the middle of the nineteenth century this vital question was utterly neglected. The General Board of Health had been allowed to expire, and though some of its rather ineffective powers had been transferred to the Privy Council there was no staff to do the work. Simon, previously Health Officer for the City of London, had, it is true, been appointed Medical Officer to the Privy Council, but he held that post only from year to year, and in 1859 he had actually received an intimation that his services would no longer be required. On this, however, the Prince Consort took the matter up and represented so strongly to the

Lord President of the Council (the second Marquess of Salisbury) the necessity of organising an active Sanitary Department that Simon, only a week after his notice to quit, was informed that a Bill would be introduced to perpetuate his office. This measure was, by a bare majority, carried through Parliament; but for the supervision of the public health of the whole of England he was allowed only a couple of medical inspectors, whose time moreover had largely to be occupied in dealing with vaccination.

Fortunately Robert Lowe, afterwards Viscount Sherbrooke, who as Vice-President of the Council was Simon's Parliamentary Chief, threw himself with enthusiasm into the work. He was a man of many experiences and brilliant capacity. After a distinguished career at Oxford he had taken part in politics in New South Wales, and very soon after his return to England had entered Parliament, held one or two minor offices and become a regular writer for the *Times*. He achieved success notwithstanding conspicuous disadvantages. He was almost if not quite an albino, he was half blind, and his appearance, with his white hair, massive white eyebrows, and pink complexion was remarkable. He generally rode a white horse of uncertain temper (which he named "Constitutional Opposition"), but he was also one of the earliest men of note to use a bicycle, and we often saw him careering through the streets of London, despite his defective eyesight, on one of the enormous wheels of those early days. He had strong opinions, and never wanted the courage to express them in the House of Commons, where he was called the "White-head Torpedo." His good things were always flying about the town. His first wife, who was a very matter-of-fact person, brought with her some money,

and he once remarked that when in the Marriage Service he had uttered the words "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," they had little meaning, since his "worldly goods" were non-existent. "But you had your great intellect," objected his wife. "Yes, my dear," he rejoined sweetly, "but I did not endow you with that." When he had to deal with matters of agriculture he said, "The country gentlemen take more interest in Cattle Plague than in Reform, for Cattle Plague ruins ourselves, Reform only our children." When a disappointed candidate for office, after making a violent attack on the Government, concluded his speech with an expression of "absolute affection" for the Premier, Lowe said, "It is all very fine to talk about affection: what he wants is a post-nuptial settlement." When he was present at the opening of the new drill-hall of a Volunteer Corps, the Adjutant apologised for the closeness of the room. "I have no doubt it is the *esprit de corps*," was Lowe's reply. When the Revisers of the Bible proposed to change "Deliver us from evil" into "Deliver us from the Evil One," his comment was that the chief result of revision seemed to be to let the Devil into the Lord's Prayer. He defined the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a taxing-machine entrusted with a certain amount of misery which it is his duty to distribute as fairly as possible. But one might digress indefinitely in recalling the old stories of Lowe's flashes of wit. I need only say that he caught Simon's enthusiasm, warmly took up sanitary questions, which had previously lain outside his course of study, and both at the Council Office and in the columns of the *Times* did much to crystallise the reforms which were then in a fluid state.

Backed by his support, Simon, who was possessed with a virtuous obstinacy which no rebuffs could check, was allowed to devise a scheme for the comprehensive organisation of the sanitary administration of the country. Nothing could be more chaotic than the arrangements then in force. It was impossible to tell under what jurisdiction this or that sanitary question was legally placed in the country, when one local authority was responsible for the drains and another for the pig-styes; or under what central department's cognisance it fell in London, when the Editor[1] of *Punch* had to decide on the merits of sewerage schemes, and the Home Office (which was dubbed the "Last Home" Office) had to see that the health of the living did not suffer from the interment of the dead. Boards of Guardians, Parochial Vestries, Local Boards, Improvement Commissioners, and Town Councils, had concurrent or conflicting powers as to such matters as the suppression of nuisances, the provision of drainage, and the treatment of the sick poor. Often the districts of two of these authorities overlapped each other, in which case the inhabitants might have to pay double rates as the price of their interests being neglected by two bodies instead of by one only. If they wished to appeal to the Government, only a profound knowledge of a large number of much confused statutes enabled them to apply to the proper department in London. Different machinery existed for working each of half a dozen Acts. The Vaccination law was put in force by the Privy Council in conjunction with the Poor Law Board, the Local Government Act by one branch of the Home Office, the Alkali and Metropolitan Water Acts by the Board of Trade, the Burial Acts by another branch of

[1] Tom Taylor was in charge of the Local Government Act Department.

the Home Office, the Diseases Prevention Act by the Privy Council through the Boards of Guardians, the Quarantine Acts by the Privy Council through the Customs. There was no unity of practice, and it even happened once or twice that the Privy Council and the Home Office sent separate inspectors to deal with the same outbreak of disease, and that the local authorities were fairly confounded by the conflicting recommendations of the representatives of two different departments.

But most epidemics ran their course unheeded. No obligation existed to report them, and such measures as were locally taken were generally spasmodic and often useless. The science of disinfection was in its infancy, and the operation generally consisted in what Simon called "futile libations and powderings," utterly without effect upon the low organisms which we now know to be at the base of most diseases. The pollution of streams was nowhere checked, and the whole sewerage of London converted the Thames into a gigantic sewer, of which the filthy contents were washed backwards and forwards by the tide, with an amount of offensiveness that now and then made the House of Commons, to say nothing of the rest of Westminster, almost unbearable. Much of the water-supply of the metropolis was shockingly polluted, and Simon showed a Royal Commission[1] how one Water Company had "homicidal antecedents on a really stupendous scale."

In the provinces the state of things was particularly bad. Some large towns had no system of sewerage

[1] Simon was an excellent witness. In the course of his evidence before a Committee on Vivisection he was asked, "Do you think there is any justification for these experiments on animals?" "Not if you would prefer medical men to experiment on their patients," was the reply.

whatever, others depended for their water upon wells in a filth-sodden soil. The housing of the poor was terribly unhealthy, and Kingsley's was a typical description of the dwelling—

> "Where packed in one reeking chamber
> Man, maid, mother and little ones lay,
> While the rain pattered in on the rotting bride-bed
> And the walls let in the day."

When infectious disease appeared in families crowded together in this fashion, it was widespread and fatal. There were no hospitals, or scarcely any, to which such cases could be removed, and isolation at home was rarely possible. What wonder if epidemics were frequent and deadly, and diseases specially associated with the pollution of earth, air, and water raged unchecked? People had not yet recognised the fact that disease and death are regulated to a great extent by causes which are absolutely under human control; that if, for example, there are two hundred deaths annually in a town of seven thousand inhabitants it is pretty certain that at least fifty of these deaths are directly attributable to defective sanitary arrangements; and that cause and effect may generally be traced as plainly as if the excessive mortality had arisen from poisoning or starvation.

The public were ready enough to be shocked by a railway accident killing a dozen passengers, by a shipwreck drowning a score or two of sailors, or by a colliery explosion suddenly hurling fifty poor toilers into eternity, but they failed to understand that all the hazards of travel, all the perils of our coasts, and all the disasters in our mines, were not costing one-tenth of the number of lives—then estimated as over one hundred thousand—which were annually sacrificed by the want of proper

action in such essentials as drainage, water-supply, the abolition of nuisances, and the isolation of infectious disease.

It was this lesson which Simon set himself to inculcate; and he was fortunately helped by a huge and destructive epidemic. If it had not been for the cholera which scourged London in 1866 his task would have been far more difficult than it was. At last the public were thoroughly frightened, and the result was that successive Ministries became impressed with the absolute necessity of sanitary reform. Mr Disraeli had not yet given utterance to his famous dictum, "sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas"; but when the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos became Lord President of the Council in 1868, he took up the matter with the same sort of vigour which had characterised his doings as chairman of a great railway company. As an illustration, I may mention the fact that on one occasion when a ship with cholera on board had arrived at Gravesend, and I was sent down to confer with the municipal authority and the Customs officers as to the measures to be adopted, the Duke ordered me to report the result to him at the Euston Hotel forthwith, although it was impossible for me to get back till between twelve and one in the morning. And there, in the small hours, he made arrangements for the action to be taken on the following day.

The Duke was bent on making his department the Ministry for Health; and if he had remained at its head this would no doubt have been done. But he became Colonial Secretary, and was succeeded at the Privy Council Office by the Duke of Marlborough, so that particular project fell to the ground. However, Simon's reports, bringing into strong relief the amount

of preventable disease which was occurring, and the wretchedly insanitary condition of much of the country, had attracted public attention. A Royal Commission was appointed, with Sir Charles Adderley (afterwards Lord Norton) as its Chairman, and made sweeping recommendations for the reconstruction of both central and local authorities. Meanwhile Simon was gradually acquiring a position independent of the general organisation of the Council Office, and was placed at the head of a department of his own, where for the first time he was authorised to correspond directly with local bodies. It happened that I had previously had a good deal to do with this branch of the work, and my association with the *Morning Post* had enabled me to write numerous articles on subjects connected with the public health. When, therefore, Simon asked me to join his new department I was glad to do so, even at the sacrifice of some of my prospects in the Civil Service.

The experience was useful to me. Not only was Simon a man of great scientific attainments, but he was full of common-sense. He detested circumlocution, liked information to be given and opinions to be expressed in plain language; and I may safely say that the red-tape-worm, which is the curse of the Civil Service, was a parasite unknown in the Medical Department. Besides, it was singularly pleasant to take even the smallest part in the building up of what would evidently be a great organisation, dealing with the entire sanitary government of the country.

I was fortunate to have for my immediate chief Mr John Francis Rotton, who was Simon's right-hand man, and afterwards became Legal Adviser of the Local Government Board, took silk, and received a Knighthood. Although he could never be persuaded to publish

anything, I found him to possess an extraordinarily wide knowledge of literature, and his frequent custom was to entertain a small number of friends at his house in South Kensington, where his dinners were of the pleasantest kind and were remarkable for good talk of a literary sort — in which, by the way, the present Master of the Rolls, then Mr Cozens-Hardy, often figured, with various men who have since become distinguished.

For a year or two we were lodged in Richmond Terrace, Whitehall; then we were transferred to a house (now pulled down) in Parliament Street, from the windows of which I could watch, at a distance of only a few feet, the fashioning of a young lady with a magnificent figure then being carved on the front of the new block of Government offices, which she now decorates as Europa. And in those tumble-down quarters was laid the foundation of various measures which afterwards became law with far-reaching effect. But in 1871 an Act was passed which rudely dissipated Simon's dreams of an independent Ministry of Health, and attached him to the congeries of atoms then brought together under the name of the Local Government Board. The story of the birth and early development of what has become one of the largest and most important departments of the State has now to be told.

CHAPTER VI.

FORMATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD— STANSFELD AND LAMBERT.

It was in the year 1870 that the Government of the day decided to propose legislation upon the report of the Royal Sanitary Commission, with a view to remedying the confusion of central and local authorities which has been already described. It was contemplated that Goschen, then President of the Poor Law Board, should be the Minister at the head of a new department, in which were to be combined Public Health, Poor Law, and other branches of local government, while throughout the country local authorities with increased powers were to be set up. It happened that before the necessary Bill was introduced political exigencies required the transfer of Goschen to the Admiralty, but he had previously taken so large a part in its preparation that he was entrusted with its conduct through the House of Commons. His divided duties prevented his doing this with success, and eventually he left the matter to his successor, James Stansfeld, who found it expedient to drop everything but the consolidation of central functions, and in August 1871 an Act for that purpose received the Royal assent.

The Royal Commission, in recommending that the Public Health and the Relief of the Poor should be in

charge of a single Minister, had expressed its opinion that separate secretariats should be established for each of these branches of administration. If that recommendation had been carried out, Simon would naturally have been in charge of the Sanitary Department, while some representative of Poor Law would have been responsible for the other. But this course was not adopted. Stansfeld was already installed at the Poor Law Board, had interested himself in the problems of Pauperism, and had not devoted his attentions to sanitary questions. If it was unfair to say of him that he knew about as much of science as a cow does of conic sections, it is yet undeniable that at that time he failed to appreciate the possibilities of preventive medicine and the importance of dealing in a comprehensive fashion with the public health of the country. Simon and his department were relegated to a subordinate position, and he complained bitterly that if a town wished to avail itself of his advice as to some sanitary question he was not even allowed to write a direct reply, since officialism required that all letters should proceed from the secretariat. That he regarded this question not merely as one of form, will be shown by his sarcastic suggestion that

"There would be difficulty in medical consultation-correspondence on the treatment of disease if it were made circuitous; if, for instance, a foremost London consultant, having to suggest to his professional brother in the country some different method of treatment for the squire's asthma or the lady's megrim, were not in direct correspondence with his fellow-practitioner, but must have his medical suggestions adopted by the family solicitor and expressed to the distant doctor in the form of a lawyer's letter."

Other complications arose, such as are perhaps inseparable from the transaction of business which is partly in technical and partly in lay hands. Simon had to submit his reports, and those of the medical inspectors, for the President's approval, and Stansfeld's criticisms sometimes gave rise to a vigorous exchange of minutes which did not make for peace.[1] There was probably some justice in Simon's complaint that his professional staff was flagrantly inadequate, as there were not enough medical inspectors to visit more than about three per cent of the sanitary districts of England annually, and thus the supervision was so slight as to be futile. Still, for some five years he stuck to his post, mostly fighting, and in spite of all obstacles he was successful in securing some important reforms. In 1871 public anxiety was aroused by the Prince of Wales's attack of typhoid fever, which for some time threatened to have a fatal termination. The heart of the nation was stirred to its depths as the sufferer hung between life and death, and when the Thanksgiving[2] for his recovery had come, there was a general demand that preventable disease should be systematically dealt with. "If preventable," said the Prince himself, "why

[1] I especially remember one case in which Simon disposed of a sentimental objection from Stansfeld by a sentence of Rabelaisian humour (quite unquotable) which had the result of shaking Whitehall with laughter. But it was not calculated to make the Minister love his subordinate.

[2] This illness also had a marked effect in bringing to the surface the latent loyalty of the people, which had found little opportunity for expression during the long seclusion of Queen Victoria after her widowhood. A letter written on Thanksgiving Day by the head of a foreign Revolutionary Committee, sitting in London, gives an idea of the impression produced on outside observers: "These English are a nation of fools; they were all mad this morning, and they will be all drunk to-night —but the Revolution is adjourned for fifty years." A copy of this note reached the Scotland Yard authorities in due course.

not prevented?" The Ministry was forced by public opinion no longer to delay the measures recommended by Simon and the Royal Commissioners, and in 1872 Stansfeld carried, without much difficulty, a preliminary Bill which set up Local Health Authorities, required the appointment of Medical Officers of Health and Inspectors of Nuisances, and would have made compulsory the establishment of a hospital for infectious disease for each district, or group of districts, but for the opposition which caused this particular clause to be dropped in order to lighten the ship. Another valuable Act was passed to prohibit the Pollution of Rivers, and before Simon's resignation he saw the entire sanitary law materially amended and consolidated in a single statute. It is not too much to say that the Public Health Act, 1875, has enormously benefited the health of the country, and it must be remembered that many of its most important provisions were due to Simon's instigation. It was carried through the House of Commons in 1875 by Mr Sclater-Booth (afterwards Lord Basing), whose mental acquirements were not of a high order, but whose geniality and good-humour gave him a popularity in the House which was more effective than brilliant attainments in disarming opposition.

It will be gathered from what has already been said that the first few years of the Local Government Board were somewhat stormy. It had, however, the advantage of a permanent chief, whose abilities had been recognised by the heads of both political parties. John Lambert had been for a good many years a Poor Law Inspector, and had distinguished himself in work outside the scope of his ordinary duties. To him had been committed the particularly difficult task of devis-

ing arrangements for the relief of the distressed operatives in Lancashire during the cotton-famine. He had originated the proposals embodied in what is known as Gathorne Hardy's Act, by which the Metropolitan Poor Fund was established and the wealth of West London was made to bear its share of the charges of pauperism in the poverty-stricken East. He was the chief adviser on Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867, was in constant attendance while it was going through Parliament, and I have heard him describe his awe and his eventual triumph when he was called into the meeting of a Cabinet (composed largely of Dukes) whom he persuaded to abandon the celebrated clause as to the "Compound Householder," round which the fight in those days had waxed hotly. He boasted that on this occasion Disraeli said to him, "All depends on you." Afterwards he was appointed a member of the Royal Sanitary Commission, and in 1869 and 1870 he went to Ireland, at Mr Gladstone's request, to obtain information on various matters in connection with the Irish Church and Land Bills, as to which he made special reports to the Cabinet.[1] Yet his extraordinary abilities and grasp of details were, as Goschen said at a Civil Service dinner, quite unknown to the public at large, and his official income never approached that of a popular dentist or of a moderately successful stockbroker.

He had only just missed the Secretaryship of the

[1] After his retirement in 1882 he was by no means inactive. At Gladstone's request he prepared an elaborate paper on the Extension of the Franchise, and his principal suggestions were embodied in the Act of 1884. In that year, in association with Sir Charles Dilke, he formulated a scheme for the Redistribution of Seats, which was agreed to, with some amendments, at a conference of the chiefs of both political parties. For this, and for his work as Chairman of the Boundary Commissions, he was made a Privy Councillor.

Treasury, which, with its salary of £2500 a-year, is the greatest prize in the Permanent Civil Service. In 1870, on the occurrence of a vacancy, Gladstone, as First Lord, had announced to his colleagues his intention of appointing Lambert to the post, but Lowe claimed that, by an arrangement of old standing, the patronage rested with himself as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The question was referred to the Cabinet, who decided that the right was alternate, and that this was the Chancellor's turn. So Lowe appointed Sir Ralph (afterwards Lord) Lingen, whose work he had seen at the Education Department, and Lambert was left out in the cold until the formation of the Local Government Board.

He became its first Secretary, although nominally he shared that post for a year or two with the late Henry Fleming, a curious old beau, almost as well known by his sobriquet of "The Flea" as Greville was by that of "The Gruncher," and, like Greville, a famous adjuster of social disputes.[1]

Upon Lambert mainly fell the work of organising the new department. He was handicapped by the fact that, with one or two exceptions, the personnel of the Poor Law Board was by no means strong. Lambert so clearly recognised this disadvantage that one of his first steps was to secure the appointment of three new officials, all of whom possessed some legal qualifications. With consummate acuteness he arranged in appropriate divisions the heterogeneous subjects which had been

[1] When Stansfeld became President, Fleming undertook the task of introducing him into society, and a story was current that after The Flea had insisted on his getting clothed by a fashionable tailor, the President was one day caught standing on an official table opposite the looking-glass gazing with surprise and admiration at the unwonted figure which he presented.

swept under his control, and he displayed unlimited tact in conciliating opposing interests and in adjusting the difficulties which inevitably cropped up. He was greedy for work, sparing neither himself nor others, and a record of the time which he and his chief assistants devoted to their labours would surprise people who have a general notion that the day of a Government official consists of light occupation for, at most, some five or six hours. Lambert's official day often extended to at least twice that length.

He was always ready to accept additional duties, and this willingness on one occasion was unfortunate. It happened that just when he was overwhelmed with the complications involved in organising the business of the Local Government Board, a desire was expressed in the House of Lords for a modern Domesday Book in the shape of a return of all owners of land, and he undertook to have the work carried out. He did not appreciate the fact that the staff and machinery of the statistical branch were not quite equal to the task, and it happened that returns from local authorities were accepted and published without the correction of obvious errors; that the same property was in some instances entered two or three times over, and that individual landowners found themselves scheduled under different names for various portions of the same estate. Thus a valuable compilation was disfigured by its inaccuracies, which were ruthlessly ridiculed by the press. The matter was not very serious, but I have no doubt that Lambert was particularly annoyed at it. Accuracy and precision were qualities which he rated most highly, and a blunder in a statistical table distressed him as much as if he had played a false note in one of the string quartettes in which it had been his

delight to take part with Cardinal Newman and two other friends.

His cleverness in the preparation of answers to questions in Parliament was remarkable, and he had a special talent for including only such information as it was convenient to give, while satisfying the terms of the inquiry. Sclater-Booth was dominated by the intellectual superiority of his subordinate, and obediently spoke from his brief without venturing outside it. During the tedious passage of the Public Health Bill of 1875 through Parliament, Lambert was always at his elbow, and never failed to meet any objection raised by opponents.

Meanwhile Simon had been largely concerned with the great epidemic of small-pox which, in 1871 and 1872, raged first in London and then in the provinces, and swept away nearly fifty thousand victims. Most of the population were unprotected, for the Vaccination Act of 1867 was too recent to have had general effect, and the machinery for enforcing it was extremely defective. But in 1871 an amending statute required the appointment of local officers for the purpose, and the department was occupied in directing their action. Moreover, the quality of the operation as generally performed left much to be desired, and the medical inspectors were charged with the duty of bringing it up to a proper standard.

It is possible that the system which Simon set on foot forty years ago, and which resulted in the general diffusion of vaccination, may have rendered the present generation less susceptible to small-pox, and it is certainly remarkable that what used to be one of the most widely fatal of maladies has now almost ceased to figure in our death returns. The annual

death-rate from it in 1871-75 was 411 per million, in 1901-05 it was only 25 per million; and whereas it used to kill, in pre-vaccination days, about one-fourth of those attacked, there have lately been several considerable outbreaks without a single death.[1] The disease seems to have lost its virulence, and as it is not known to be much, if at all, affected by sanitary improvements, the change of type may possibly be attributable to the hereditary influence of vaccination. But this is an afterthought. We were far too much occupied in the practical work of establishing the new system to have much time for speculations as to its consequences in the dim future.[2]

In 1876 Simon resigned; the Medical Department became actually, what it had previously been only in name, an integral part of the Local Government Board, and my official career entered upon a new phase.

[1] In 1906, out of more than a thousand cases notified, only sixteen were fatal, although a considerable portion of the thousand were doubtless unvaccinated.

[2] We have yet to see the result of what is practically the abolition of compulsory vaccination, since any parent may obtain exemption by making a declaration of "conscientious objection," and indeed in a good many unions no penalty for non-vaccination is incurred even if this formality is omitted. With the irony which often characterises misprints, a daily newspaper in the west of England declared that "Mr Balfour consented to make the Vaccination Bill unworkable and illusory by giving up the whole machinery of *compunction*." So too it happened that small-pox had been spread by tramps just at the time when Exeter had established a system of electric tramways, and I was reported, as Local Government Board Inspector, to have recommended the Guardians to take measures for the vaccination of the "trams." The printer had evidently forgotten his p's and taken the wrong cue.

CHAPTER VII.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM—AMATEUR MUSIC—ROYAL ACADEMY —CHRISTIE'S.

As a fairly assiduous playgoer, I must have witnessed some hundreds of performances, but none stands out in my memory as more admirable than that of Robson in "The Porter's Knot," more than forty years ago. The play was an adaption from the French, and was not of a high class. But it afforded Robson excellent scope for his talents, and I have never known any other audience to be swayed so frequently backwards and forwards between laughter and tears. The actor seemed to command their feelings at his will, and I still have a choking sensation at the recollection of the old couple (Robson and I think Mrs Stephens) sitting on a wheelbarrow in the middle of the stage, and lamenting over the scapegrace who had ruined them. The whole house wept as I have seen it sob at "Froufrou"; it laughed as I have heard it roar at "Charley's Aunt"; and this over and over again within the compass of one poorish drama.

A dozen years later I saw Aimée Desclée's rendering of Gilberte, which, on quite another plane, was also an extraordinarily finished and artistic piece of acting; and was to my mind far superior to that of the "divine

Sarah" in the same part. It was a marvellous portrayal of pathos, in which the actress disappeared and the woman touched all hearts.

Another fine performance was Henry Irving's Hamlet —on the night of its production. It was disfigured by mannerisms of gait and gesture, but there was thought in every line of it, and it was not then marred by exaggeration. Irving was subdued by his audience, which was mainly literary and critical, and the chastening result was admirable. A month afterwards I went again, and could scarcely believe that the same Hamlet was on the stage. It seemed to me that the delicacy of the former representation had disappeared; and I was sorry to have disturbed my earlier impressions. The best Hamlet I ever saw was Charles Fechter, if only one could forget his strongly marked foreign accent.

Those early days witnessed the introduction of two innovations in theatrical matters. A well-known bookmaker had conceived the idea that the London public might favour the importation of some of the musical farces which Offenbach, Lecoq, and others had made popular in Paris. So he built (or bought) a theatre in the North of London, where were played such pieces as "Geneviève de Brabant," "Giroflé-Girofla," and "La Fille de Madame Angot." They were excellently put on the stage, with a good company and a capable orchestra. Also, as *première danseuse*, a lady figured whose universal nickname was "Wiry Sal," and who certainly combined grace and agility in a marvellous fashion. So all the gilded youth of the day betook themselves to Islington, not omitting to call at the "Angel" for a libation of that white rum which was *de rigueur*. "Geneviève" and "Madame Angot" sounded from every barrel-organ, and musical comedy, which was developed

by Gilbert and Sullivan and still flourishes with the utmost vigour, became for the first time popular.

Another new departure also had its birth in an out-of-the-way place. In a little theatre in Tottenham Street the Bancrofts produced successive plays by Tom Robertson with a naturalness and an attention to detail which speedily brought them into favour. Marie Wilton, then Mrs Bancroft, had been known as the most delightful of actresses in such extravaganzas as "The Maid and the Magpie," and "Aladdin or the Wonderful Scamp"; and in "Society" and other light comedies of its class she made her mark at once, while her husband was unsurpassable as the languid and supercilious aristocrat. They gathered together a clever company, among whom Messrs Hare and Honey were the most prominent. Their aim was to place real life on the stage with suitable surroundings. They vetoed farcical exaggerations of speech and extravagances of dress; the furniture of their theatrical drawing-rooms no longer resembled that of a lodging-house; and their lords and ladies were not like the old "Adelphi guests" who appeared at evening parties in morning coats and white cotton gloves. In many such matters reforms which afterwards became general were initiated by the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's; and Robertson's plays, as presented by them, did much in educating the public taste up to the appreciation of refined acting and delicate humour.

My interest in theatrical matters became closer when Clement Scott, then dramatic critic to the *Observer*, asked me to act as his occasional deputy. In that capacity I criticised a good many plays and found it uncommonly hard work. It was then the habit to produce them on Saturday nights so that the daily papers

might have plenty of time to review them at leisure. But it was a considerable strain to compose a critique of perhaps a column on a play which ended not much before midnight, for a paper which went to press soon afterwards. To give a connected account of a previously unknown plot; to particularise the chief incidents; to estimate the goodness or badness of the acting of each character; to guess the effect, not on a first-night audience (which is a special one) but upon average playgoers; to point out redundancies which ought to be pruned off, and obscurities which ought to be cleared up; to do all this in an hour or an hour and a half in such a fashion that the play and the acting would be fairly judged and the public would have before them the material for deciding whether the performance would be to their taste—this was a task which sometimes sent me to bed with a whirling brain that repelled sleep.

On one occasion I had the very unusual experience of seeing what was described as a new and original drama actually hissed off the stage at the Adelphi Theatre. The acting was not excruciatingly bad, although one or two of the company were of the class which Daudet describes as seeming never to be listening to what the others are saying, but always to be reflecting on what they themselves have to say next. The play, however, was not only the worst I ever saw, but the worst that anybody ever saw. Nobody could make out what it was all about. I know there was a bigamous lady whose first husband declared that he had escaped from prison as a mourner at his own funeral; there was a heavy father of high military rank who occupied himself by drilling his servant in his drawing-room; there was a footman whose habit it was to play a penny whistle to his master's daughters in the same majestic apartment;

there were excited females in dresses of surpassing ugliness who read heartrending letters, uttered sentimental adjurations to an unfortunate child, and generally rushed about and screamed spasmodically; there were several gentlemen in conical hats, some of whom took poison; but the blurred impression refuses to shape itself into a connected history. The audience soon began to jeer; the narration of the prisoner's escape from the dungeon was met by a shout of "Why didn't you stop there?" The most sentimental platitudes were received with shouts of laughter, in which one or two of the actors could not help joining. A running fire of chaff eventually made further progress impossible, and the curtain fell amid a storm of hisses and derisive laughter. An announcement was then made from the stage that the piece would not be repeated.

I had previously met with a curious experience of hissing. As a private individual (not as a critic) I had occupied a seat in the dress circle of the Queen's Theatre during a play which I found very dull; and when, to relieve its dreariness, an old man came on the stage attempting to appear drunk, but in my eyes only appearing disgusting, and when this exhibition was greeted with a round of applause, I used the only means known to me of expressing my dissent from that applause—I hissed. Whereupon a box-keeper addressed me after this fashion, "Are you annoyed by some gentleman hissing, sir?" I might have said, "No, I am annoyed by some people applauding," but unfortunately this did not occur to me till next morning, so I merely answered, "It was I who hissed." "Well, if you hiss again I'll have you turned out." "Good; I dare say I shall find something more to hiss at pre-

sently." "You can have your money returned." "I want to see the after-piece, not my five shillings." Exit box-keeper to return quickly with a policeman, to whom directions are given for my removal on the next offence. Policeman stands sentry accordingly (rather puzzled at this new function of superintending art criticism), and the only reason I escape ignominious expulsion seems to be because the next round of applause, following on some pseudo-drunken gesture, is qualified by so many hisses from all parts of the house that my feeble effort can scarcely be singled out for reprehension. What might have happened if I had stayed, or attempted to stay, throughout the performance, I cannot say. But having quitted my seat, I was denied readmittance during the progress of the piece, and had to content myself with writing a letter to a newspaper suggesting first, that the action taken was quite illegal, and secondly, that it was particularly injudicious, for if a manager suppresses the *populus me sibilat* by policemen, people are likely to distrust the *mihi plaudo* of his advertisements.

My complaint started a vigorous correspondence. The law of the case was shown to be entirely in my favour by quotations from Lord Mansfield and other judicial authorities. But supporters of the playwright attacked me energetically on the ground of good taste; urged that a play with such an excellent moral ought not to be hissed; and declared that I was in an unenviable minority. Of course I had to point out that the gist of my complaint was that I was not allowed to stay for that excellent moral. How could I tell that there was a touching lesson in the third act if I only saw the first? How was I to know that virtue would be triumphant at a quarter to ten when I left vice rampant at

half-past eight? Like a ticket-of-leave man I had tried to return to virtue but was stopped by a policeman.

Also, I protested against the notion that a minority is necessarily unenviable. I represented that if Beethoven's "Adelaïde" and the most popular ditty of the music-halls were sung in turn to an average theatrical audience, I should be in a minority in preferring "Adelaïde." And so, when I disapproved of the delineation of drunkards, I was not ashamed, except for my fellow playgoers, to be in a minority. Stage drunkards have become so common that we shall soon have stage lunatics and stage idiots. To me the vice of intoxication is rather sad than comic. A drunken man is an unpleasant companion, but except to the street-boys he is rarely amusing. When he sticks a postage-stamp behind his left ear, and attempts to get into the letter-box to go by the mail train, he may be a fit object for pantomime, but not for comedy. Thus I justified my hiss, and I am inclined to think that, even at the present day, my reasons would apply with some force to a good many theatrical representations in which the caricaturing of drunkards is an easy but contemptible way of raising a laugh.

Open-air performances were then still in their infancy, and even in the hottest days of summer, *al fresco* entertainments were rare. Now and then, however, after a fish dinner at Gravesend, we used to visit Rosherville Gardens, where there was an airy little theatre; Baron Nathan performed his celebrated dance among the eggs; and the strains of a tolerable band were the prelude to ambitious displays of fireworks. On one occasion a party of us had just finished our feast, and were announcing our intention of going to the gardens, when the waiter appalled us by the

news that they were closed for the week. Of course we grumbled at our bad luck, and were discussing what we should do with the rest of our evening, when a gaunt figure at the other end of the coffee-room arose and addressed us. "Gentlemen, I am the Mayor of Gravesend, and am exceedingly sorry that you should come to my borough and find no amusement. Can I do anything to help you?" We expressed our thanks, but were unable to suggest any form of entertainment, unless indeed he would kindly favour us with a comic song. He regretted that he himself was no vocalist, but told us that he knew of an admirable singer whom he would summon. Then he sent a message presenting the Mayor's compliments to Mr Jones, and requesting his immediate attendance. Mr Jones promptly appeared, and proceeded to sing an uncommonly clever topical ditty; some of our party followed suit, and we had such a jovial evening that at the end of it the Mayor invited us all to a banquet at which, a fortnight later, he entertained us with the most profuse hospitality. He was indeed a genial soul, and we learned that he had distinguished himself in various ways, notably by a letter of which everybody was talking. He had once or twice paid municipal attentions to Royal personages who had embarked at Gravesend; and another Mayor, having to discharge similar functions in the case of a Royal duke and duchess, wrote to him piteously asking for a few hints, especially with regard to the approved mode of departing from the august presence. Our friend replied in the following terms:—

"My dear Sir,—The only hints I can give you are these. Don't turn your back to the Duchess, for that would be rude. Don't turn your face to her, or the

Duke might be jealous. But just wriggle along sideways. Also, if possible, it would be well for you to kick Sir Edward Watkin. I wish I had. — Yours faithfully, —— ——

"*Mayor of Gravesend.*"

Now Sir Edward Watkin was Chairman of Directors of the railway, and was apt to thrust himself into unwelcome prominence on State occasions, so the Mayor's letter was hailed with general joy, and doubtless inculcated some useful lessons. Its tone was a little more lively than that of most official correspondence.

In those days there was plenty of amateur music in London, and I had the luck to take part in some of the best of it. By turning two good-sized houses into one, some friends of mine had made a single drawing-room sufficiently capacious to hold a stage, and at the same time to seat a couple of hundred people; and for several successive seasons they gave such operas as "Il Barbiere," "L'Elisir d'Amore," and so on. The daughter of the house (who afterwards became an Ambassadress) was quite the most brilliant non-professional soprano I have ever heard, and acted as charmingly as she sang, while the company (*quorum pars parva fui*) was composed of the best amateurs who could be got together. We used to have a couple of rehearsals weekly, for a month or two beforehand, and finally four performances, for which everybody wanted invitations. Now and then a star from the Opera House was asked, and I remember how Mademoiselle Titiens came behind the scenes with the kindly compliment that "we professionals have a great deal to learn from you amateurs."

In connection with another sort of musical performance I saw a curious strike among ladies, of whom several figured rather prominently in London society. We were rehearsing Benedict's "St Cecilia," in which is a charming part-song for female voices. Seymour Egerton (afterwards Earl of Wilton) was our very capable conductor, of whom it was said that he could play every instrument in the band, and that in the midst of the loudest chorus each note came to his ear separately. On this occasion the ladies made one or two blunders, and he lost his temper. "Miau! Miau! Cats on the tiles," he cried, with a bang of his bâton; "now begin again!" But they all felt insulted, suddenly rebelled, and as he began to beat time they with one consent sat down. Egerton recovered himself at once, and said suavely, "Ladies, I apologise humbly; but really, if you had heard the effect produced, you would have said that any language was permissible. *May* we try once more?" They relented; and the strike was ended without even a Board of Conciliation.

Though I have been at times concerned with both music and the drama, I never ventured into the region of art criticism. Yet once I was at the Royal Academy on Varnishing Day. I suppose that my proceeding was immoral, but it happened many years ago, and there must be a statute of limitations for matters of conscience; so my confession shall be frank. I went to the studio of a friend and found him just starting to varnish his picture at Burlington House. He suggested that I should come too, as he had received the Varnishing Ticket of another artist, known to us both, who was in Scotland, and whom he proposed that I should personate. So rare an opportunity for an outsider was

too tempting, and I fell. My only difficulty was that when I reached the door I was called on to sign my name, or rather the other man's name; and, unluckily, just as the clan of Elliots have varying numbers of "l's" and "t's," so the name which I had to inscribe presented a similar puzzle with respect to other consonants, and I had to take refuge in a blot. Then we went together through the galleries, and I was rather humiliated by the fact that (of course having no catalogue) my friend the artist recognised most of the pictures, simply from the different styles, as surely as I recognise the handwritings of my relations. "Of course you know this is a Hook. You could almost sniff the sea breezes," I was told. But I had to confess that I knew nothing of the kind. I thought that I must re-establish my character; and I took measures accordingly. My friend happened to leave me for a short chat with Alma Tadema, and when he rejoined me I piloted him gently to a distant wall where was a picture which I observed looked like one of Faed's. "Oh, no!" said my artist; "you're thinking of somebody else. Faed never painted a sea-piece in his life. His are always *genre* pictures, or interiors." "I suppose I am mistaken," I answered; "there is no name upon it, is there?" After a search he discovered the almost illegible signature of "Thomas Faed" across the canvas. "That is an extraordinary thing," he said; "it *is* by Tom Faed—not the one you were thinking about, but his son. What on earth made you suppose it to be his?" "Might there not be something in hereditary touch?" I meekly suggested. "Well," he responded, "it is difficult to imagine what can be the connection between styles in a picture of waves breaking on the shore, and in one of, say, girls sitting at a window,

such as old Tom Faed paints." "Heredity creeps out in all sorts of unexpected points," I answered sententiously. He was evidently perplexed with the problem, and after we had walked across another gallery, he broke out again. "I wish you would try to analyse your ideas, and see whether you can trace the line of thought that made you believe that wave-picture to be by the only Faed that you knew to exist." Whereupon I hope I satisfied him by telling him that after much introspection and deep reflection I thought it might be because when he left me in order to speak to Tadema I had gone to the picture, read the name in the corner, and had then come away as far from it as possible in order not to arouse his suspicions.

It was at this exhibition that Leighton showed a statue which gave rise to considerable discussion, and about which I remember one good thing. Somebody said "Leighton is a great artist, but in sculpture he has his limitations." "Perhaps this is his statue of limitations," was the reply.

One more art reminiscence, and I have done. I was at Christie's when a lady who professed to be enthusiastic about such matters expatiated on the beauties of a certain *pietra dura* cabinet. Then a thought struck her. "By the way," she said, "who was Pietra Dura?" She was quite satisfied on being told by an art-critic, without a smile on his countenance, that "Pietra Dura" was a Pope who flourished about the year 150 B.C., and was a great patron of Italian art-work.

CHAPTER VIII.

OBER-AMMERGAU PASSION PLAY, 1870 AND 1900.

Nowadays the Ammergau Passion Play is known to all the sight-seers of the world; but before the year 1870 scarcely anybody had heard of it. It happened, however, that in some magazine I had read a description of the previous representation of 1860, and as I was anxious to see the Bavarian Highlands I made my way there just before the outbreak of war between France and Germany. Railway facilities were lacking, and I walked through the delightful country in the centre of which is Hohenschwangau, the Balmoral of the kings of Bavaria. It would be difficult to find a more lovely succession of picturesque landscapes than those afforded by the valley of the Lech. There is a torrent of tremendous volume, even very soon after its birth in the hills, and big boulders stand up in it completely covered with a blaze of alpine roses. The blue stream brawls round them, the spray splashes over them, and the green leaves and the glowing blossoms make patches of brilliant colour in the middle of the cascade. The snow on the mountains glistens in the sun, the rugged outlines of the granite peaks are projected against a cloudless sky. The dew is still on the grass and each little pearl catches up the golden glory of the sunbeam that steals over the hills. Then comes a defile where

stony walls imprison the stream, and a sombre chasm where the gloom is only relieved by the pink leeks and the emerald mosses which creep down to the water's edge. But it is impossible to put into words the fresh breeze from the snowfields, the rapid motion of the water, the slow waving of the shadows from the dwarf firs, the flashing of the wings of the dragon-fly, the hum of the bee that sucks the sweets of clover and orchis, the whir of the grasshopper and the flitting of the butterflies among the bilberries. To appreciate the Lech Valley you must see it, and it is well worth seeing.

For a considerable distance the road skirts the shore of the Plan See, which is a fine lake nestling among the hills. Further on, my course takes me to the Royal hunting-grounds, where the quantity of game is remarkable. Dotted here and there are keepers' houses with antlers over the door and big dogs that bay at the stranger. Presently you catch sight of a huge dome surrounded by a straggling pile of ruins, which turns out to be the ancient monastery of Ettal, privileged by many Papal Bulls and possessing skulls and bones and other relics enough to form the nucleus of an Anatomical Museum. Then you hear the gurgle of a little trout stream which pursues its course till it comes under the mammoth finger of rock some fifteen hundred feet high, which is known as the Kovel, and overhangs the village of Ober-Ammergau.

I need not describe the Passion Play in detail, for this has been done over and over again. But the following notes, which relate to the representation of 1870, may be of interest, especially as Mayr, who then took the chief part, retained it for the three subsequent representations in 1871, 1880, and 1890. In 1900,

when I was again present, his successor was Anton Lang, who acted fairly well but did not possess Mayr's exceptional qualifications.

Ammergau is a little village among the hills, and even in 1870 could only accommodate a small proportion of those desirous of being present at the Passion Play. Throughout the previous day and night the Tyrolese peasants stream over the hills in their picturesque costume. Every hour from daybreak until seven o'clock the churches are thronged by hundreds who attend early Mass as a fit preparation for what they regard as a religious celebration rather than a theatrical performance. The theatre, seating between five thousand and six thousand persons, is for the most part open to the sky. You feel the breeze of the fresh summer morning, the swallows dart through the air, and the mists creep along the flank of the peak which towers above. The stage is divided into three parts. On the right is the house of Pilate, on the left that of Annas, both with balconies, from which the Roman Governor and the High Priest address the Jews below. Between these houses is a central stage which is sometimes hidden by a curtain, and outside are gateways through which are visible the streets of Jerusalem. Punctually at eight o'clock a cannon announces the commencement, and from opposite sides of the stage the chorus enters, consisting of twelve men and eight women, clothed alike in long flowing robes, with crowns on their heads and sandals on their feet. Each scene from the New Testament is preceded by a corresponding one from the Old; and it is the function of the chorus to explain the connection between the two. The typical scenes are tableaux in which the figures are men and women, and no movement takes place nor is there any dialogue.

The scenes of the Passion, on the other hand, are shown with speech and action, the words being always as nearly as possible those of the Bible.

The curtain rises on the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and then comes the entry into Jerusalem. The populace streams from the City in bright Oriental costumes, the children waving palm branches and the crowd shouting "Hosanna." And then the Christ, the centre of all this enthusiasm, appears riding on an ass and dismounts at the entrance of the Temple. He has a noble but rather melancholy face, with regular features, the eyes dark and expressive, a broad and intellectual forehead, silky black hair floating down to the shoulders, and dark moustache and beard. Mayr, like all the other actors, is a native of Ammergau. He is about six feet in height and is of a splendid type of manly beauty. As you see him, with the traditional purple robe, a scarlet mantle hanging loosely over it, you fancy that the figure before you might have emerged from one of the pictures of the Old Masters, although it is without the effeminacy which often spoils their sacred ideals. His voice ranks with those of Gladstone and the Hungarian Jokai as the most musical I have ever heard, but has an undertone of sadness. His accent is pure and refined, and never suggests the Bavarian peasant. His movements are simple and natural, not in the least theatrical. He overthrows the tables of the money-changers who are profaning the Temple, the coins roll to the ground; he liberates the doves, which fly away to the hills; and then there is a change in the temper of the crowd. Those who were but now shouting "Hosanna!" begin to murmur at this interference with their trade. The discussion on the tribute money and the prophecy as to the destruction

of the Temple further irritate the hearers, and the meek John and the impulsive Peter are alike startled by the change in popular feeling.

Another impressive scene is the feast at Simon's house where Judas protests against the waste of the precious ointment. In a tunic of the traditional yellow and a coarse grey cloak, with unkempt hair and beard, with a face of deathly pallor and low sunk eyes that glare like those of a wild beast, with furtive manner and restless gait as he slinks away at the Master's reproof, he at once achieves the dramatic effect of arousing the hatred of his audience. When he is asked whether he finds his service profitable, he shows for answer his empty purse; when he comes before the Sanhedrim and is persuaded to accept the fatal bribe, everybody is thrilled with his nervous counting out of the money, his clutching at a coin which rolls away from the heap, and his departure, his greed already tempered with terror, as he bears the bag that holds the price of blood. Fine too is his wild, unreasoning return to repay the bribe, and his reception of the sneer of Caiaphas at these qualms of conscience which come so obviously too late.

Pilate is another admirably played character, and we recognise the fine conception of the polished Roman who despises these Jews and their superstitions and shows a growing pity for their victim until daunted by the suggestion that this is a rival of his Imperial master, that to release him would be to forfeit Cæsar's favour and the chance of promotion.

The culminating scene is of course that of the Crucifixion, represented with singular reverence and dignity. The excitement was then intense, there were few dry eyes in the theatre, and grown men all around me were

sobbing aloud. It was a scene to live among the most solemn memories of those present, who would for long seem to hear "the shout of triumph and the wail of agony which were alike stilled on the sacred heights of Calvary."

That was nearly the final performance of 1870. The war broke out and Mayr had to join the ranks of the army, although he was not sent to active service. On my way home I was one of the last to pass through Paris, and I saw the placards proclaiming a state of siege.

Thirty years afterwards I was again present at the Passion Play and was grievously disappointed. The stage management was more conventional, the crowds were more precisely drilled, the costumes were more costly, the music was more elaborate. But it seemed to me that the parts were over-acted, that the naturalness had to a large extent disappeared. Some of the scenes were more attractive to the eye but they did not touch the heart. I wondered whether the change was not in the performance but in myself, till I remembered the audience of 1870, all sobbing, and I contrasted it with that of 1900 where scarcely any one shed a tear. It seemed to me that the later representation was on a lower plane; that smartness had banished simplicity, and an appeal to popularity had dissipated pathos.

CHAPTER IX.

MOUNTAINEERING—FINSTERAARHORN—THE IMSENG MURDER—STEIN ALP DANCING.

The Privy Council Office was liberal in its holidays, and I devoted mine mainly to travel. Of course I went the regular Swiss round. To see something of the Lake of Geneva, to go to Chamonix, and over to the south side of Mont Blanc, across the Theodule Pass to Zermatt, then round by the Rhone Valley to Interlaken and Grindelwald, and finally back by Lucerne and Basle,—this was the conventional tour, and, with the addition of the Engadin, has remained so. But one incident in my earliest trip was distinctly connected with mountaineering. I was crossing the Glacier des Bossons, when my guide directed my attention to some pieces of old clothing and other *débris* on the ice. Being of an age little given to sentiment I paid scant heed to his representation of their possible importance, and it was not till afterwards that I came to understand that they were doubtless remains of Dr Hamel's party, who in 1820 had perished in a crevasse while attempting the ascent of Mont Blanc. They had lain in the glacier for more than forty years before its advance brought them to the surface; and some other articles subsequently found—human bones, clothes, leaves of a Latin

book, and part of a lantern—are now treasured in our little Museum of Curiosities at the Alpine Club.

Three years later I was seized in good earnest with the mountaineering fever. It happened that I had walked up, in the autumn of 1864, from the Rhone Valley to the Grimsel Hospice; and as I made a short cut by the shore of the usually frozen lake I became aware of the descent of a human body, head first, from a slab of rock above to the chilly water below. Its owner afterwards became the bishop of an English diocese, but at that period he had unfortunately not attained to the dignity of an apron; and when he rose to the surface after his header, he displayed an anxiety to know whether I was the first of a party likely to cut off his retreat to his clothes. I was able to reassure him, we walked together to the inn, and he confided to me that next day he was to be joined by an Alpine Clubman for an expedition to the Bel Alp over the top of the Finsteraarhorn. I eagerly accepted an invitation to go with them, and thus was enlisted in an adventure which was to be the first of a long series, rich with pleasant reminiscences in after years. The peak was one reckoned in those days to involve a hard climb, and Hardy's description in 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers' had represented it as particularly formidable. Modern familiarity has bred contempt for its difficulties, but nobody can look at the giant needle which towers over the rest of the Oberland without recognising the fact that its ascent can never be child's-play. I have a distinct recollection of a certain chimney of rock that could only be scrambled up by a series of wriggles in which hands, feet, and back seemed all to be called into action at the same time; of an arête which has been described

as an infinitely narrow ridge of rock, with an everlastingly vertical precipice on one side, and one longer and steeper on the other; and, above all, of the breaking away of a snow-bridge, when I suddenly found myself suspended over an apparently bottomless crevasse, and gazing up at the sky through the hole which I had made in the snow. I could not help wondering whether the rope by which I was hanging, and which was reducing my waist to wasp-like proportions, was likely to give way, in which case the subsequent proceedings would have interested me no more. In a good many years of mountaineering I have encountered certain real dangers, but none have impressed me so strongly as the imaginary peril of that abrupt descent below the surface of the Aletsch Glacier more than forty years ago.

Yet what times those were, and what heroes we thought ourselves when our expedition was accomplished, for it has been remarked that the mountaineer, like Christian, is apt to find that beyond the Delectable Mountains lies the Country of Conceit. The Bel Alp Inn, to which we descended, is perched upon a rock above the greatest ice-stream in the Alps, and it was then the regular summer quarters of Professor Tyndall, who was a delightful talker, though mainly about himself. I remember his describing one highly critical situation in the course of his solitary ascent of Monte Rosa. Nothing could be more rash than the expedition, for the man who crosses a snow-field alone always exposes himself to the chance of perishing miserably in a concealed crevasse; whereas, if roped to a couple of companions, he is practically safe from this risk. However, Tyndall had successfully made his way to the top, having escaped the dangers of the glacier

and conquered the difficulty of the final arête; and he was basking in the glorious sunshine when, as he sat, he saw his axe, which he had placed by his side, gliding away over the snow. If it fell, nothing on earth could bring him down alive: no human being could descend those steep slopes of ice alone without the help of an axe. The anxiety of the moment was tremendous, for it was out of his reach, and he could only gaze passively as it slid to the edge of the little plateau and nearly disappeared. Not quite, however, for the axe-head buried itself in a ledge a foot or two below, and fortunately stuck there. The Professor said it was his narrowest escape in many years of climbing; and he never again ascended a snow-mountain alone.

From the Bel Alp I went on with the future Bishop to Zermatt, whence we ascended Monte Rosa on such a magnificently fine day that we spent more than an hour on the summit; saw the plains of Italy spreading at our feet far beyond the Cathedral of Milan; and were even able to descry on the dim horizon a faint streak of blue, which our guides seemed to experience much satisfaction in asserting to be the Mediterranean. One of them, by the way, was young Peter Taugwalder, the companion of Mr Whymper on the occasion of that first conquest of the Matterhorn which was attended by such terrible loss of life. A day or two later I had another novel experience, for when we were descending the Weissthor Pass to Mattmark, Peter proposed that we should have a *Schlitt-partie* or glissade. "But is not that a crevasse down below?" I remonstrated. "Certainly, sir, all right," was his only answer; and I was so much afraid of seeming afraid that I passively yielded, although the great gulf yawned before us and

descended to terrific depths. We sat on the snow, one above the other, each taking charge of the feet of the man behind him, and down we sped at lightning pace, to the obvious detriment of the garment most concerned. And when we came to the crevasse, the nearer lip of which was much higher than the farther one, our impetus carried us over quite safely, although the sensation of shooting through the air over a tremendous abyss was trying. But these were first impressions, which soon gave way to unmitigated enjoyment: glissades, whether on soft snow or on hard ice, became simple matters of steering and balance, and I was soon persuaded that no sport in the world had such charms as mountaineering.

From Mattmark we went down to Saas, where I made the acquaintance of the celebrated Pfarrer Imseng, whose love of climbing was soon to cost him his life, not indeed by accident, but by murder. He combined the functions of innkeeper with those of parish priest, and when mountaineers came to his inn his great delight was to take them up some little-known peak, thus enabling them to dispense with professional services. He thereby roused much jealousy on the part of the local guides whose business he spoiled, and when he was found drowned in the glacier stream, with injuries to his head that looked uncommonly like wounds from a sharp instrument, suspicion of foul play was excited. A magisterial investigation was held, and even some arrests were made, but the crime could not be brought home to anybody. Many years afterwards, however, an old man made a deathbed statement to the effect that he had been actually present. He said that while tending cattle near the Mattmark Lake he had seen the aged Pfarrer

attacked by two guides, whom he mentioned by name. They felled him with their ice-axes, and after killing him, threw his body into the water. The witness of the deed uttered an involuntary cry which betrayed his presence, whereupon they threatened him with the same fate, but eventually spared his life on his solemn vow of secrecy, which he kept as a heavy burden on his conscience for many years. Before the time of his dying deposition, one of the guides inculpated had perished in an avalanche, but the other survived, and it was for some time a question whether criminal proceedings should be taken against him. As, however, so long a period had elapsed, and as no corroboration was possible, it was decided to let the matter drop, though the story became so widespread that the reputed murderer was frequently pointed out to tourists as the hero, or rather the villain, of the tragedy.

In the days when Switzerland had not yet become the playground of Europe, if tourists wandering from the high-roads wanted accommodation for the night, they often had to resort to the house of the priest, who, like Imseng, acted as a sort of amateur innkeeper and sent in his bill (generally of ridiculously small amount) with the items duly set forth. There was a delightful old curé who used to live on the Göschenen Alp, at the head of the valley opening opposite the entrance to the St Gothard tunnel, who entertained many travellers in the summer, perhaps all the more willingly because for eight months in the year he had to endure the rigours of a nearly arctic winter, and was almost cut off from the world below. If it were not for a great work of which his conversation used to be full, and which was no less than a History of his valley for the last two centuries, he might have been a prey to pro-

found melancholy. But his literary labours furnished occupation for his serious moments, while a musical box with which an Italian prince had presented him, and which enveloped four well-known tunes in many roulades of tinkling, gave music to his life. That musical box was his pride and joy, and we would not for worlds have thrown cold water on either his music or his antiquarian talk. He was an ardent politician, too, full of information on the subjects which then agitated Switzerland, and he boasted how at the recent plébiscite he had led down all the men of his valley, without exception, from their little pasture among the glaciers, and how, leaving their flocks and herds to the care of women and children, like the Etruscans in Macaulay's Lay, the company crossed the snow-field and the torrent and plodded weary miles along the St Gothard in order to vote against the Revision of the Constitution.

We fared better there than in the neighbouring valley of Gadmen, where we expected to get quarters at the old-fashioned châlet inn. But as we approached we found to our surprise that the silence was broken by a succession of rifle-shots, and presently the sound of many voices in chorus came to our ears. It was the last place in the world where dissipation was to be expected, and we were astonished to find that all the peasants of the neighbourhood, in their most gorgeous attire, had come up to this little inn, perched high among the glaciers, in the first place to shoot for a fat sheep, and in the second to make merry through the night. Our hostess, in reply to our request for peck and perch, expressed a fear that neither would be very satisfactory to us, frankly observing that little food was left, and that though we were welcome to

beds (for none of her other guests required them) she feared we should not get much sleep. Our dinner was not appetising, for it consisted of a sort of wishy-washy water-gruel, which it would be gross flattery to call soup, and of a substance which appeared to be indiarubber fried in lamp oil, but which our landlady declared to have formed part of the anatomy of a sheep. However, as nothing short of a steam masticating-machine would have produced any effect upon it, we had to fall back upon bread and cheese and rather rank bacon, upon which, with wine which threatened horrible consequences, we made our not very sybarite repast, happy in the consciousness that after a ten hours' walk over Swiss mountains one's digestion, like one's appetite, is equal to anything. When we were sitting over the acid decoction which reminded us of that served to the hero of 'Anne of Geierstein,' there came a knock at the door, which was only opened after some shuffling about and giggling on the part of a group outside. We had to receive a deputation, male and female; and their spokesman, a fine young fellow who had been victor in the shooting competition, and had accordingly been decorated with a crown of Alpine roses, made a neat little speech in very queer German, requesting my companion and myself to grace the dance with our presence. It was impossible to refuse, especially when our momentary hesitation was construed into a want of appreciation of the local beauties, and when each maiden was led up to us in turn in order that we might choose from among them. The system seemed to be rather like the Canadian plan of selecting "muffins," for having once taken a partner it appeared to be the right thing to dance with her throughout the evening, and I paired myself off with a young lady of magnifi-

cent proportions and singular activity. The châlet in which the dancing went on consisted of a single room, lighted by some dimly burning paraffin lamps, with so low a roof that the beams now and then produced bumps on the heads of the dancers that would have puzzled phrenologists; with a little platform in one corner, on which were crouched a couple of old fiddlers, working away as if for dear life, their fiddle-bows almost touching the rafters. Waltzes, galops, schottisches, and polkas followed each other in rapid succession, square dances being much too tame for the spirits of the company.

Anything like the agility of my charming partner was never, I venture to assert, witnessed by the most ardent votary of Terpsichore. She plunged wildly round, she skipped half across the room, she bounded back like an indiarubber ball, she gave a mighty stamp on the floor as she turned, she uttered a wild howl at intervals. It is not modesty which prevents me from saying to what extent this magnificent performance was supported. I have witnessed the miseries of an aeronaut in an eddying wind; I have seen a stout swimmer whirled down the lasher at Cookham; I have compassionated the rider of a runaway horse at Melton; but I can scarcely recall to my recollection a more helpless object than the exhausted form which was borne round, at the rate of forty miles an hour, by my indefatigable partner. Still, I really did my best, and after a little practice I began to exercise some separate volition, and even to jump and kick. I may observe that our relative position was not exactly that of the waltzers of polite society, for my Swiss maiden utterly declined to have her hand held by mine in the conventional fashion, and we clasped each other

round the waist in a manner more convenient than elegant. The result was that we swung round like one person; and certainly a most flattering verdict on our dancing was pronounced by a gentleman who kept coming up to assure us that everything was "Vortrefflich!" "Ich bin ein Schweitzer; Sie sind ein Engländer; gut! gut!" was his first exclamation, and having once got hold of an idea, he repeated it at intervals throughout the evening, displaying at last an inclination to weep on my neck, which was very embarrassing.

How we danced till we melted away; how we entertained our partners, with two or three of their male admirers, at a little supper; how we chorused out "Volkslieder" at the top of our voices; how we finally escaped to bed, but not to tranquillity, for the jovial Swiss sang songs in the next room, danced in the one above, and generally rioted in the one below; how we plaintively appealed to the "free and independent citizens" to give us a little peace; how they took this as a hint to redouble their noise; and how, finally, at ten o'clock next morning, after eight hours' sleep, interrupted at intervals by what seemed to be thunderclaps and earthquakes, we left them dancing still, having never ceased throughout the night,—all this is too terrible to describe. But for a quiet invalid, who happens to be rather a light sleeper, I can scarcely recommend the Stein Alp Inn on the day of the annual Alpenfest.

CHAPTER X.

MOUNTAINEERING—THE CAPUTSCHIN—VIOLA PEAKS —ACCIDENT—HADOW—MOORE.

Of course mountaineering has its drawbacks. It may be questioned whether any climber ever accomplished an entire expedition without doubting, at some period of the day, whether he was not an utter imbecile to be there, or at any rate without echoing the sentiment of the Irishman who apostrophised Mont Blanc, "Arrah thin, and it's meself would sooner be climbin' ye if ye was rolled out flat and sown with praties." When your guide rouses you at 2 A.M., and you try in vain to swallow a muddy compound which he declares to be coffee; when, by the light of a lantern that only makes darkness visible, you stumble up the pine-clad cliffs, barking your shins against roots and your head against branches; when you find yourself hanging on a steep ice-slope in the teeth of a furious north-easter which chills you to the marrow and dashes the ice in your face from the steps which the guides are cutting above you; when the man in front suddenly gives signs of unsteadiness in a place where a slip would inevitably pull the whole party over; when you are consumed by fleas in a châlet or by mosquitoes on the lake-side; when the provisions have been finished on the previous afternoon and you find some fifteen or twenty miles between you and breakfast; when

small worries are frequent and big catastrophes threaten,—you must be endowed with never-failing enthusiasm and good-humour if at no period you ask yourself whether the game is worth the candle. Yet to the hard-worked man of business or the wearied politician there is no tonic like the air of the glaciers, no recreation, in its etymological sense of renewing exhausted forces, like mountaineering, whether on a grand or a small scale. The fresh breeze, the healthy open-air life, the exercise of the muscles, the steady struggle with difficulties, the glorious scenery, the rosy sunrise on the snow, the wild storm that drives the clouds in eddying wreaths beneath one's feet, the glacier torrent rushing down, the alpine roses clustering over the boulders, the ever-varying hues of rock and snow-field and lake,—all these are elements of the right sort of enjoyment for a holiday.

My first visit to the Engadin was in the Sixties, when it was almost a *terra incognita*. The waters of St Moritz were then much affected by Italians, and to some extent by English; but Pontresina was a small village that visitors had scarcely more than discovered. The "Krone," barely a quarter of its present size, and the little "Steinbock," were the only inns in the place; and guests were welcomed by the landlord instead of having to curry favour to obtain accommodation at all. It is sad that the old friendly hostelries have nearly passed away and have been replaced by huge caravanserais where, as Sala said, you are known as a number and treated as a cipher. I cannot help regretting the cosy little room at the "Krone," where Liszt's most brilliant pupil used to discourse to us the loveliest music as we sat in the twilight, letting the strains of the Moonlight Sonata fall softly on our ears while we watched the swaying pines and the white torrent, and

the huge glacier flashing like silver armour on the breast of the giant opposite. It is curious how the Pontresina Capuchin has been carved by Nature into a grotesque but very close resemblance to human physiognomy. It is perhaps a couple of thousand feet from the top of the Monk's cowl to the lower end of his face, two huge crags form his eyes, another constitutes a gorilla-like nose, while fallen rocks and ice make up a greyish beard, resting on the glacier below. You may or may not recognise the likeness without having your attention specially directed to it, but when your eyes have once seized it you can never look up the Roseg Valley without meeting the stony stare of the ogre. Possibly it was at Pontresina that Elizabeth Barrett Browning drew her inspiration for the lines:[1]—

"Every age,
Through being beheld too close, is ill-discerned
By those who have not lived past it: we'll suppose
Mount Athos carved, as Persian Xerxes schemed,
To some colossal statue of a man.
The peasants gathering brushwood in his ear
Had guessed as little of any human form
Up there, as would a flock of browsing goats.
They'd have, in fact, to travel ten miles off
Or ere the giant broke on them.
Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,
Mouth muttering rhythms of silence up the sky
And red at evening with the blood of suns;
Grand torso, hand that flung perpetually
The largesse of a silver river down
To all the country pastures. 'Tis even thus
With times we live in—evermore too great
To be apprehended near."

[1] In the later editions of 'Aurora Leigh' some variations from the text above given are to be found. Thus instead of "Persian Xerxes" we read that "Alexander" schemed. Probably Mrs Browning had discovered that the scheme was traditionally ascribed to A, not to X. But doubtless both A and X are unknown quantities.

In those days there were still some unclimbed summits in the Engadin; and I recall among my pleasantest memories a week spent in exploring the range lying between the Bernina Pass and the Stelvio. I was joined at Pontresina by a couple of friends, and we were lucky enough to secure the services of the two best guides of the district. One of them was Jenni, the famous climber who, being roped to Professor Tyndall when they were carried away by an avalanche, jumped down a crevasse in the hope of stopping their course, but was dragged out by the rope, nearly bruised to death, and finally just managed to pull up the party at the edge of a tremendous precipice.

Our first night was passed in a shed built on a mountain pasture by some Bergomasque herdsmen. What handsome fellows they seemed as the fire of our bivouac lighted up their swarthy faces, and showed an interior that Salvator Rosa might have painted. The monster cauldron of polenta and cream, the tall shepherds with their patriarchal crooks, a typical Italian boy with dark inquiring eyes, two huge wolf-hounds, our stalwart guides with their ropes and ice-axes, an obtrusive goat which, with designs on our supply of salt, insisted on entering and was undismayed by the kicks received in several summary processes of ejection,—all these, lit up by the dancing flames, were sufficiently picturesque. The Bergomasquers were delighted to abandon their loft to us, and there we courted sleep on a sloshy mass of steaming vegetation, fondly and delusively called hay. Sleep, however, was difficult of attainment, for not only were we packed as closely as half a dozen Mr Tafts in a four-wheeler, but one of our guides indulged in constant nocturnes on a nasal organ of exceptional power, and the cows (which were near enough to make it possible

for us to give them a friendly pat on the back through the rafters) seemed to have solved the problem of perpetual motion.

At daybreak we began and finished our toilet by the simple operation of shaking ourselves, and presently we were stumbling over rocks and barking our shins, while one of us, at least, was reflecting upon his folly in voluntarily undergoing so much discomfort. But this sensation, not surprising in the natural man when still only half awake, soon disappeared before a glorious struggle with tolerably formidable difficulties. As we made our way upwards the wind grew fiercer and colder, and now and then whirled the snow in our faces in blinding eddies. The virgin peak which we had set ourselves to conquer glistened in the sunlight high above us, but it was not easy to select the line of attack. First we had to cross the ice-fall of the glacier with a labyrinth of crevasses, then to make our way up a rock face on which there seemed no hold for hand or foot, and finally, if we could manage to attain a point on this cliff some twelve hundred feet above the glacier, there was a couloir which had evidently been the channel of innumerable avalanches. As to the advisability of ascending it, our guides differed—one of them declaring that it would involve too much step-cutting in hard ice, and was not free from the risk of being swept by a fall of snow or stones from above. But after some discussion of alternative routes, of which each seemed to possess still greater drawbacks, it was decided to try to reach the base of the couloir and then to retreat if it should be found unduly hazardous.

With the combination of skill and instinct that characterises a first-rate guide, our leader cut his way through the intricate network of crevasses at the head of the

glacier, now chipping notches for hands and feet in the steep side of some ice-wall, now passing through some sub-glacial passage which water had furrowed, but finally arriving at a big bergschrund which divided the ice-field from the crags. A snow-bridge of rather unsubstantial character presented itself, and over this frail structure, with a span of some seven or eight yards across a deep drop, we proceeded to cross one by one, being of course carefully roped. But it was touch and go, for having done its duty as regards three of our party the bridge gave way with the fourth, and fell with a crash into the chasm, leaving him to swing pendulum-fashion below the cliff where we were firmly anchored, but which he only gained after some rather rough knocks. Finally we made our way to the foot of the couloir, and a tough job was before us. It was poised at an inclination of something like two-thirds of a right angle. Its snow was worn down by repeated avalanches into the hardest possible ice, and it stretched up for some six or seven hundred feet. The amount of step-cutting involved was considerable, and our head guide frankly confessed that he did not like the prospect. But there was no help for it, so we began painfully hewing our way, and for over two hours we slowly progressed up that unblessed ice-shoot, with an arctic gale ominously suggesting frost-bites. The occupation of looking through the legs of the man above you soon becomes monotonous, and as fingers and toes get more and more numb with the intense cold, it is harder and harder to avoid slipping out of the tiny notches which are all that the leader allows us by way of steps. Though a slip of one of the party would not quite certainly have pulled down the rest, and the rope theoretically afforded adequate protection, I am glad that the experiment was not tried.

Eventually our goal was in view; and a short walk along a gentle hill of snow took us to the summit of our peak, where we basked for an hour in the most welcome sunshine that ever warmed mortal body. We decided unanimously that it would be foolhardiness to risk the descent of our couloir, since the sun would be certain to dislodge avalanches; and after some investigation we found that the other face of the mountain was practicable. With a little trouble in negotiating a hanging glacier we reached the head of a series of snow-slopes obviously constructed for the special purpose of furnishing glissades for mountaineers; and in a very short time we were two or three thousand feet lower down, with only a long moraine between us and the upper pastures. It is true that there is nothing like the sharp stones of a moraine for trying boots and tempers, but the success of our climb outweighed all small drawbacks; and we returned to our damp lodging supremely happy, although the heat of the steaming hay convinced me in my dreams that I had suddenly been converted into a cucumber in a forcing-pit, and that the gardener was trying to suffocate me by refusing to open the frame and let in the air.

That week was one of almost uninterrupted enjoyment. Almost, for on one occasion we chose the wrong peak, and only discovered our mistake after a hard day's work, when we saw for the first time that it was the second in height; the actual summit was evidently some forty or fifty feet higher, easily attainable from our position, but cut off from it by an interval which we had no time to traverse before nightfall. The prospect was magnificent, for our standpoint towered over everything except that one unlucky peak which we had looked at in the cloudy morning and pronounced to be

lower than the one we climbed. But our attention was diverted to the anathemas of Jenni, who flung himself down in a fury and swore first in Romansch, then in German, and then in Italian, with a wealth of expletive that was funny enough to go some way towards consoling us. On the next day we had a further shock. We had found what we believed to be an entirely new pass, not marked in the maps, and, as we assumed, never before trodden by mortal foot. Alas! our exultation was suddenly dissipated by the discovery of a button. Fancy the feelings of Columbus if the first object that met his eye on the coast of San Salvador had been a garter with a Spanish maker's name on the buckle! Figure to yourself the chagrin of Bartolomeo Diaz at finding an old pair of boots of European fashion among the common objects of the sea-shore at the Cape of Good Hope! Similarly, we were crushed by that odious button, and were only half consoled by Jenni's suggestion that it had formed part of the nether garments of some smuggler who had made his way over the mountains with Italian tobacco, and that no ordinary and legitimate traveller had preceded us. However, in the course of a few days we had climbed two virgin peaks and had reached a secondary summit of another, all approaching eleven thousand feet in height, so our expedition had been eminently successful.

It was a season or two later that I met with an accident which very nearly cut short my career in the mountains, and indeed on this planet generally. It was my own fault. Mountaineers are pretty well agreed that there ought to be at least three men on a rope. If one slips on a rock-face, or goes through the snow lying over a concealed crevasse, two other companions ought to be able to hold him up, but a single

one may easily be dragged down. So I ought to have known better when, having engaged the well-known Alexander Lochmatter of Macugnaga to act as my chief guide, I allowed him, on there being some difficulty in obtaining a second, to persuade me that we two might well do our climbing without anybody else. For a few days all prospered, and we climbed one or two peaks and passes to our mutual satisfaction, taking care to keep the rope taut in doubtful places, and each from time to time holding the other up when the snow proved treacherous. Lochmatter was particularly anxious that we should ascend Mont Blanc, in order to show the Chamonix guides that they had no right to a monopoly of the "Monarch of Mountains"; and as the track is in fine weather one up which you could almost drive a cow, as there is scarcely any climbing and only a long and tiring trudge up snow-slopes, I had no hesitation in undertaking the expedition. There was indeed a precedent, for had not so experienced a climber as A. W. Moore made the ascent from the Aiguille du Goûter, accompanied only by Christian Almer? But though we started in perfect weather, no sooner had we reached the Grands Mulets, where we intended to sleep, than clouds covered the sky, and in the course of the evening there was a tremendous snowstorm with a raging gale which lasted all night. Next morning it was snowing still, and retreat was inevitable, so we made our way downwards over the Glacier des Bossons, which was covered with a thick layer of drifted snow. Lochmatter led, I followed carefully in his footsteps at a distance of some three yards, and the rope was taut between us. Suddenly I found the snow give way under my feet, but instead of being held up I was only for an instant checked by a jerk, and then down came Lochmatter

nearly on the top of me. Without suspecting it, we had been walking on a thin crust concealing a big crevasse, so when Lochmatter, feeling the tug at the rope, had stuck his axe into what he supposed to be firm ice, it went through into vacancy.

I had only just time to think that we were done for, when our fall was suddenly stopped, some five-and-twenty feet down, by a gigantic block of ice which had tumbled athwart the crevasse. If we had been a few yards one way or the other we should have inevitably gone to the bottom, and our relics would have probably been brought to light at the foot of the glacier in some forty years. I do not know the depth of that crevasse; I can only say that its walls went down and down till they ended in darkness. But fate decreed that we should find safety at that particular place, and as the mass of ice was well covered with fresh snow we escaped without much damage. Indeed, as my fall had been broken by the jerk of the rope which pulled down Lochmatter, I had nothing worse than a few cuts and scratches, while he, falling the whole five-and-twenty feet without a check, received a blow on the head which stunned him, and for half a minute, as he lay insensible, I feared that he might be seriously hurt. He soon came to, however, and although he had lost his axe, which is still in the depths of the glacier, I held to mine, which served to cut steps in the wall of ice up which we had to make our way.

I mentally vowed never again to be one of only two men on a rope, but Lochmatter went a good deal further than this. He declared that nothing would induce him ever to set foot on a snow-mountain again; and though he had earned celebrity as a fine and daring mountaineer, had received no permanent injury, and was in the full

vigour of life (about thirty-three, I fancy), he forthwith abandoned his profession as guide, at which he could command exceptionally high pay. Some twenty years later, just after the opening of a section of the Zermatt Railway, I was crossing the Ried Pass, when my guide, the well-known Imboden, happened to tell me the story of a member of the fraternity who had so thoroughly lost his nerve from a narrow escape that he had given up guiding and had taken to driving a fly on the road between Zermatt and St Niklaus. I was interested to find that Lochmatter was the man in question, and that he was still engaged in an occupation of which the monotony was in curious contrast with the adventurous doings of his early days.

This is the only actual accident that has befallen me in the mountaineering of many seasons, and the inference is that the dangers are not extraordinarily great. I have rarely yachted, but I have not escaped being run down by a steamer on one occasion, and being caught by a hurricane which nearly sent us to the bottom on another. I have only shot for a few days occasionally, but I have been in serious danger of my life from a double-first-class man, with spectacles and a tendency to fire at his neighbour's legs; I have found in hunting that my horse has now and then launched me on an experiment in aviation which ended abruptly; while motoring seems almost as destructive to the people who indulge in it as to those who presume to get in their way. "But then," it is objected, "even if you choose to risk your own life, have you any right to risk those of your poor guides?" This is a point on which much argument might be expended, and every lady who wears pearls might be reminded that

"For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark."

It is a question of degree; the profession of guide is very popular, and I doubt whether the mortality is much greater than that among gamekeepers. A friend of mine was shooting on a Norfolk property where his host happened to have killed a keeper and a boy in the same season, and he asked a beater whether his master felt the matter much. The answer was, "Well, sir, he didn't care much about the b'y. He gi'e his mother five pounds. But he were wery wexed about the man. He didn't go out shooten' for a whole week." This in Norfolk was considered evidence of the climax of human emotion, but a mountaineering accident excites much more attention and horror. All that can be said is that most amusements have a spice of risk in them, and mountaineering is not an exception in this respect.

I fancy that no accident in the Alps has excited public feeling more than that which occurred on Mr Whymper's first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865. I was specially shocked by the news, as poor Hadow and I had played many a cricket-match together, and only a day or two before he started for Switzerland he came to see me at the Privy Council Office. I happened to be treasurer of a club to which he belonged, and when he told me that he was going abroad with Hudson, celebrated as an ardent mountaineer, I laughingly said to him, "Well, if you're going to break your neck in Switzerland you had better pay me your subscription before you start." To which he rejoined that I might be easy about his coming back, as Hudson was not going to take him climbing that year. In less than

a fortnight the poor fellow was killed, and when the telegram came one of my colleagues recalled our conversation. Nobody else, I think, of my many friends has ever lost his life in mountaineering; for I am sorry to say that with Donkin, who was swept away by an avalanche on Koshtantau, and who was a delightful companion and the cheeriest of men, I had no more than a slight acquaintance.

There was one old ally of mine, however, among the pioneers of climbing—namely, A. W. Moore—whose comparatively early death was mainly due to the effects of the fever which he contracted in the Caucasus, where he had in 1868 made the first ascent of one of the twin pinnacles of Elbruz, now recognised as having dethroned Mont Blanc as the monarch of European mountains. He was a man of singular ability; and when Lord Salisbury was Secretary of State for India, Moore was his trusted subordinate, and was the draughtsman, often on very slight instructions, of the most important despatches which emanated from the "Political and Secret" branch of the department at a period of crisis in our Indian frontier policy. When Lord Randolph Churchill became Indian Secretary in the Administration of 1885 there was an amicable contest between him and the Premier as to who should have Moore as private secretary, and Lord Salisbury was persuaded to yield on the ground that Lord Randolph was new to the office and ought to have the benefit of Moore's experience. The result was that Moore devoted himself with much self-sacrifice to his chief, and eventually broke down under the strain, accentuated by relapses of the old marsh-fever. His doings in the Alps were marvellous, and the new peaks which he conquered would make a long list. Some notion of his powers of

endurance may be gathered from the fact that he once started from Courmayeur, ascended to the summit of Mont Blanc, and went down to Chamonix, all within the compass of a single day of twenty-four hours. I myself used to be rather proud of having been the first to go up the Jungfrau from the Eggishorn Hotel in the morning and return there to *table d'hôte* in the evening, after accomplishing in eighteen hours what had previously always occupied two days. But of course this was nothing compared with Moore's tremendous expedition from valley to valley over the head of Mont Blanc. And he described as well as he climbed. Many admirably graphic accounts of exploits on the mountains came from his pen; and a copy of his privately printed 'The Alps in 1864' (a new edition of which has recently been brought out) sold some time ago for £10 at a public auction. His wit was of the kind that flashes, and can scarcely be reproduced in words, but it was always ready. One of his friends of the Alpine Club, who had named each of three or four children after particular Swiss peaks, applied to him to suggest suitable names on the same lines for twins, which had recently arrived. Quick as thought came the answer, "Of course you must call the boy Monty and the girl Rosa." It would be easy to recall dozens of good things, varying from mere verbal quips to brilliant but not ill-natured sarcasms, which were poured out spontaneously when Moore was in the vein, and few men were better company.

CHAPTER XI.

MOUNTAINEERING—TYROL—MUSIC—GIRL-PORTER—CRISTALLO ASCENT.

It is to be inferred that even now Englishmen are not intimately acquainted with the mountainous region lying to the east of Switzerland, since they still disagree as to its name. Miss Busk gave us 'The Valleys of Tirol'; Mr Baillie Grohman (who lives in the country and ought to know) wrote of "Tyrol," telling us that as it was derived from "Tyr," a mountain fortress, it ought to be spelt with a "y"; while the most recent book about it calls it "*The* Tyrol." No obvious necessity exists for applying the definite article to this province any more than to Lombardy, or, for that matter, to France or Germany. But for some inscrutable reason the practice of doing so has become general in England; and indeed if any purist writes "Tyrol" without the prefix, the printer or the printer's reader is pretty sure to correct his supposed carelessness. In the early Seventies the district was altogether unhackneyed, and much of it has remained so. There was then undoubtedly more individuality about the Tyrolese than about the Swiss. Their customs, their superstitions, their amusements possessed, like their scenery, peculiar characteristics. I think it was Mr

Baillie Grohman who once found a priest actively engaged with bell, book, and candle in driving a demon out of a hump-backed tailor affected with what was obviously *delirium tremens*. After some hours of exorcism the tailor sank down exhausted, and at the same time a dog in the yard uttered a melancholy howl. Thereupon the priest announced that the evil spirit had left the man and had entered the dog, which he ordered to be shot forthwith. This miracle was duly recorded by a local paper, with a glowing tribute to the skill of the Church in subduing the powers of darkness.

One of the Tyrolese marriage customs could scarcely be introduced with comfort into this country. It is (or was) the fashion for the village poet to confront the bridegroom before the assembled guests and with brutal frankness to describe in doggrel rhymes the old love affairs of the bride. If the bridegroom was a man of spirit, he replied, also in seemingly impromptu verses, to the effect that, in the first place, he gave no credit to the aspersions on the lady's fame, and that, in the second place, he did not care in the least if they were ever so true. I remember a case in which the bride was a fair young thing of some forty summers, the bridegroom seemed ten years younger, and from his air of intense dejection it was clear that melancholy had marked him for her own, and so probably had the lady. He was vainly endeavouring to extract joviality from sour wine, and I could only infer that the catalogue of his future wife's amourettes must have been as long as the *mille e tre* of Leporello's master. But the custom as to wedding-presents is excellent. In England the guiding principle is to buy things to look more costly than they are. In Tyrol there is no decep-

tion. Every gift is in hard cash. The wedding-guests march up in turn to a table, at which sits the god-mother of the bride, and deposit their money in a huge brass dish. Then the bride offers a glass of wine and the bridegroom a cake to each contributor, and afterwards there is a dance of honour, at which all kinds of rough jokes are played upon the unhappy pair.

Tyrol is undoubtedly the home of music and dancing, and in old days I more than once made my quarters by the fine lake called the Achensee, which is the special centre of both. It was not the case of a few stock companies of musicians being brought together in order to extract from tourists as much cash as possible, but each man, woman, and child seemed to be breaking into song at every possible opportunity. The reputation of an inn did not rest on the quality of its beer or on its cookery, but on the zither-playing of the chambermaid, the bass notes of the porter, or the jodelling of the head waitress. For all I know, the road by the lake shore may now be a sort of Northumberland Avenue of mammoth hotels. But there was then only one inn, with a sort of concert-hall built on a little promontory nearly surrounded by the lake, and to this everybody used to go in the evening as a matter of course. Our landlord was the head of the music of the district, and his company consisted of seven or eight persons, all members of his family and household. His wife had a strong alto voice and a throat out of which the strange cooing notes of the jodel came sweetly. A daughter had a rich soprano of great purity, while a tremendous *basso profondo*, who I think was the porter, sang at least half an octave lower than anybody else I have ever heard. Then there was a zither-player who managed to extract a wonderful concord of sweet sounds

from her simple instrument, and the whole performance was admirable.

It is curious that almost all these mountain songs are on the old, old theme. There is no variation. A philosopher has said that "the world is governed by love and hunger," and surely the pangs of hunger ought to be depicted as well as the pangs of love. But though a man does not fall in love every day, whereas he is generally hungry every few hours, the poet is for ever celebrating the tender passion, and never sings the charms of a tender steak. Nor do we have anything about the chamois or the eagle, about the glaciers or the torrents. It is always the lover who sings, and generally he despairs. "Most musical, most melancholy" are the strains, and as they mingle with the ripple of the lake and with the sighing of the wind through the fir-trees, they have a "linkèd sweetness long drawn out" which is particularly attractive. And it is not only the household who are performers. The Tyrolese of the neighbourhood crowd in, and now and then a stalwart "Bursch" volunteers a song to which the zither-player is always ready to improvise an accompaniment. They have some home-made instruments too, constructed after the fashion of the children's toys called harmonicas, except that the notes struck are made of wood instead of glass; and it is strange to hear how much tone and resonance are extracted from that material. It is said that a good cook can make an excellent dish out of a piece of leather, but it is a novelty to find that melody can be produced by tapping a deal board.

After the singing comes the dancing, and this is really great fun. The dress of the men is most picturesque. A white shirt crossed by a pair of gor-

geous braces, a broad leather belt much embroidered, black velveteen breeches just reaching to the knee, short green gaiters showing a bit of bare leg above and below them, stout mountain boots, a round hat with an eagle's feather stuck defiantly into it—thus equipped the Tyrolese is in full dress. And how he dances! How he lifts his partner high up in the air, how he slaps his thighs and his feet, and even smites himself as if, in the words of the Hebrew Psalmist, he were an enemy to be put to a perpetual shame! How he pursues the lady who coyly retreats from him, how he expresses his devotion by gesticulations and mutely tells a whole tale of courtship, first rebuffed, and finally victorious! All this must be seen to be appreciated. London hostesses complain that the race of dancing men is extinct; why not revert to the ancient practice and recognise the fact that the performance is one to be seen, not to be participated in,—to be done by deputy, not in person? There are difficulties in the way of introducing the Indian Nautch into an English ball-room: why not import Tyrolese dancers?

All the country in the neighbourhood of the Achensee is exceedingly picturesque, especially the Ziller Thal, from which there is a little-known pass towards the Dolomites in the south. Our excursion in this direction was marked by a quaint incident. Having driven up to the village where the road ends we made inquiries for a porter to carry our luggage, consisting of a couple of tolerably heavy knapsacks and a bundle or two of plaids, up to the hamlet of Brandberg, perched on the mountain-side some four or five miles off, at an elevation of about fifteen hundred feet above our starting-place. Two out of a group of loafing villagers at once offered themselves

as candidates for the job, when they were suddenly called back by their companions in a *patois* which I failed to understand precisely, but which seemed to refer to somebody else with a prior claim to the half-crown which was to be earned. We expostulated against delay; we pressed a strapping young fellow to start with us at once; but without effect. We appealed to the landlord of the inn, who advised us to sit down and have a drink until the porter was ready. We inquired again, and "the porter" was reported to be dressing; yet again, and we learned that "the porter's" hair was being brushed—all without a word to make us suspect that "the porter" was not of the rougher sex. Our surprise may be imagined when "the porter" tripped down the stairs and appeared in the shape of a girl of nineteen, of quite extraordinary and exceptional beauty. Dressed in the picturesque fashion of the Tyrolese peasant, with a tight-fitting velveteen bodice and short petticoat, with big silver ear-rings and a waist buckle of the same metal, her appearance suggested anything but the idea of hard work, just as her trim and almost delicate figure suggested anything rather than that of great strength. I appealed to my companion as to whether "the porter" would not be the belle of most London balls, and also whether our gallantry could possibly allow her to carry our luggage. He answered the first question as emphatically in the affirmative as the second in the negative. Certainly if the clearest olive complexion, eyes of germander blue, a mouth which seemed made for—for just tantalising the beholder with a mere glimpse of teeth of pearly whiteness, if the most regular features, and the most cleanly cut chin—if all these elements on which a novelist might expatiate, but which I can

only enumerate like items in a catalogue—do not give the reader a notion of beauty, then the fault must be in the telling. Fruitless were our protests against the employment of this dazzling creature as a beast of burden. Seizing our effects she crammed them into an enormous basket, which she forthwith hoisted upon her back, and led the way briskly up the steep track which climbs the mountain-side. Indeed she made the running at such a pace that we soon began to be aware of the humiliating fact that limbs and lungs enervated by London smoke were no match for a Tyrolese "Mädeli" even handicapped by 30 lb. of luggage. In vain we begged her not to distress herself, and made panting inquiries whether she was not tired; she only gave a heavenly laugh and quickened her steps.

At last, possibly becoming aware that our remonstrances were not entirely unselfish, she condescended to halt for a few minutes on a bank of alpine roses, which made an appropriate couch; and here, by a little cross-examination, we discovered the secret of "the porter's" employment in that capacity, and of the refusal of the young men of her village to take her place. She had smiled upon a devoted admirer who was reputed to be rather wild, and was especially an object of detestation to Prince Auersperg's keepers as being the most daring and successful poacher in the district. In one of his expeditions after chamois he had fallen from a steep crag, had lain helpless at the foot of it for a day and a half, and when discovered and carried home was found to have his right arm so fearfully smashed that amputation was necessary. Our maiden, with the constancy of some of her sex, declared that this accident only confirmed her resolve

to marry him; but her father, who had always been averse from the match, now prohibited it absolutely. "What! Marry a cripple? Pray, how are you to live?" said the stern parent. "I will work for both," was the simple answer, which however was received with a derisive expression of incredulity. At last, moved by many tearful entreaties, the father declared that if within a year his daughter should show her capacity for work by the practical test of earning two hundred gulden he would give his consent; and as all the village, sympathising with the young lovers, combined to put in her way every occasion of making money, she trusted that even before her dashing poacher had completely recovered she would be able to cheer him with the confidence of gaining her hand. She told the story with perfect simplicity and artlessness, and as a blush spread over her cheeks, and her blue eyes flashed with animation, we could not help considering that poacher to be a lucky man. Then, after a short rest, she shouldered her load again, refusing with disdain our offers to relieve her of it, strode resolutely up the mountain-path, led us to the châlet where we were to sleep, pocketed our small contribution towards the two hundred gulden, dipped her face in a bubbling spring, waved an adieu to us, and disappeared among the evening shadows of the trees, as charming a wood-nymph as painter or poet could picture.

Next day we reached the Dolomites, as to which even John Ball, least adjectival of guide-book writers, confessed himself to be unable to resist the use of superlatives. He declares that a traveller who has visited all the other mountains in Europe and remains ignorant of the scenery of this particular range, has yet to make

acquaintance with Nature in one of her most fascinating aspects. He adds, with delightful naïveté, that the ascent of these peaks affords to the cragsman more excitement and variety than any other rock work, because he never knows when he leans his weight upon a huge stone that it will not crumble away in his hand, while in climbing mere granite he is pretty well aware of what he has to depend upon.

On inquiry I found that Monte Cristallo was regarded as the sort of peak which an Alpine Clubman loves, and we settled to ascend it on the following day. It was about three in the morning, and a bright moon was still shining, when we left our inn at Cortina. The dew glistened on the grass, the glaciers gleamed upon the mountains, and the torrent which had roared during the day now only purled and rippled down through the meadows. The fragrance of the fresh hay was delightful, the pines exhaled their sweetness, all was still but the tinkle of the cattle bells on the lonely alp and the bark of some sheep dog from a hillside fold. For an hour we mounted over a well-worn track to the Pass of the Three Crosses, then turning sharp to the left we made our way upward, among rocks studded with alpine roses and over turf which sprang elastic to the footfall. Far above us towered our mountain—two great buttresses of rock divided by a little glacier, which seemed to hang pendant in the air. In some four hours from our start we reached the ridge and saw at our feet the strangely coloured lake of Misurina. The little valley lay in repose in the sunshine and nestled in the arms of the big snow-peaks beyond. But we were not allowed to remain long in contemplation of the landscape. Hard work was before us, and when our guide asked what we supposed would be our line of ascent we were utterly nonplussed. I had never

seen a peak which looked so absolutely impracticable. Huge pillars of rock stood up perpendicularly, cliffs appearing to afford neither hand-hold nor foot-hold barred the way. Our guide, who had made the first ascent, told us that he had previously been repeatedly foiled, but at last, by taking advantage of this line of clefts and that series of projections, of these ledges and those crannies, he had succeeded in finding a practicable route.

Leaving our axes, for we required the unshackled use of our hands, we started to climb, but it was really no easy matter. Every muscle of the body was brought into requisition—now as we raised ourselves by hands and arms, now as we had the aid of the rope for climbing or descending some smooth slab of rock. At one point the cliff so closely overhung the ledge along which we had to pass,—a ledge here of the respectable width of some twelve or fifteen inches,—that we had to half crawl, half wriggle ourselves along it. For nervous persons this would not have been an altogether pleasant operation, for the cliff went sheer down for a thousand feet or so below our ledge. Our progress was slow, for it was no easy matter in climbing the rock face to find places for feet and fingers, although it is astonishing how much man's prehensile qualities develop themselves on such occasions. Of course the rope is the great security, for if, in the bad places, two men out of three are firmly anchored, they are able to resist any slip of the third, and when the situation was critical we never allowed more than one to be moving at once. The only material risk was from stones falling from above, of which we had one or two indications, and I was even lightly struck by one such missile. However, we did not come in for any serious fusilade. There was one narrow funnel in the rock which I can-

not understand even now how we climbed. I know that we placed our backs against one side and our knees against the other, and after a series of violent wriggles found ourselves at the top in defiance of the laws of gravitation. But it was a place where we should have thought that wriggling, without a rope to depend on, would have been fruitless, yet our guide, who bore the appropriate name of Angelo, certainly executed miraculous feats in the air without any such assistance.

At last, in seven hours from our start, we reached the top of Monte Cristallo, and were lucky enough to have a magnificent view. Only a few little clouds wreathed themselves at our feet, some thick and white, as the steam of a locomotive, some so transparent and fleecy that you could see through them the white campanile of Cortina many thousand feet below and the green vines on the ridge opposite. So warm was the sun that we were able to remain nearly two hours on the summit, revelling in the richness of a prospect which embraced almost every characteristic of Tyrolese scenery. Our descent was almost as slow as our climb, for considerable caution was necessary. We narrowly escaped one real danger. We had paused for a few moments at a gully in the rocks in order to collect some drops of water, and had only just left the place when an avalanche of stones came crashing down, completely raking the course we had taken. And as a fire of this sort is nearly as deadly as that of a machine gun, it was well that we had not encountered it. Once down at the depression between the two buttresses, we descended quickly by the snow slope, stumbled over the boulders below, crossed the flower-studded alp, bathed in the torrent, and reappeared at Cortina with a marked respect for rock-climbing in the Dolomites.

CHAPTER XII.

SWISS TRAVEL—COOK'S TOURISTS—HOTEL-BOOKS—MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

A GOOD many changes have come over the Continent since first I knew it. For one thing, co-operation had not much extended itself to travel, and it was rare to meet the swarms of personally conducted tourists who now abound, and who, like locusts, devour everything on their track. No doubt the modern practice enlarges the ideas of people whose aspirations used not to soar beyond Southend, but it is productive of inconveniences to lovers of quiet.

I think it was at Florence that the citizens were first surprised with the sight of one of those droves. Who on earth, they asked, were these shabby, dusty, travel-stained wretches who were led about by the active little man in the brown coat, through museums and galleries and palaces, and who checked off each visit as a duty fulfilled? Recourse was had to one of her Britannic Majesty's Consuls for an explanation, and it need scarcely be said that Charles Lever was quite equal to the occasion. "You have heard of our English prison system, and you have perhaps read in a translation of our popular novel 'Never Too Late To Mend' how mind and body now and then break

down under the terrible weight of solitary confinement. Well, the authorities decided that in the case of the better-class prisoners the only way to keep them alive is to send them out from time to time for change of scene. This is the first gang, under the charge of a gaoler, who, as you see, defrays all their expenses, and has them thoroughly under his command." Of course this story, told under the seal of strict secrecy to one of the most gossiping of Florentines, quickly spread over the city, and everybody buttoned up his pocket with special care on passing the unfortunate tourists, who found themselves treated with universal contumely, and were naturally indignant when they were made aware of the hoax which had victimised them. A question was even put in the House of Commons on the subject, but the questioner was obliged to be contented with the promise of an inquiry—which ended in a laugh. In old days I met one or two of such bands, and it was amusing to observe their proceedings. At the "Three Kings," at Basel, a Cookite sat by my side at dinner, and when ice was brought round for his wine he stared with blank astonishment and refused it. It was brought again and he did not like to repeat his refusal, although he evidently had not the remotest notion what this preparation could be; then, after a moment's hesitation, he put it on the middle of his plate of hot roast beef and began chipping at it. In various respects my neighbour and his companions did little credit to their nation. They clattered about cathedrals with hobnailed boots and alpenstocks; they made loud remarks to each other while Mass was proceeding; they addressed foreigners in unintelligible French, and then abused them in voluble Billingsgate for stupidity in not understanding it; they wore

paper-collars and brilliant neck-ties, and whenever they ventured to spend money without appealing to their keeper, they showed clearly their belief that they were dealing with swindlers. Nowadays co-operative travel is excellently organised, and most of those who take part in it have at any rate a veneer of civilised manners, but in its beginnings it presented some ludicrous features.

I cannot help regretting the disappearance of the old "Travellers' Books" of Swiss hotels. Those now in use are, for the most part, mere registers, with columns for names, domicile, and occupation, reminding you inevitably of the occasion when you led a certain procession from the altar to the vestry, and when, with a pen possessing only one nib, and ink of the consistency of treacle, you nervously constructed an illegible signature, under the eyes of forty people, who watched the operation as narrowly as if it had been an experiment at the British Institution, apparently with some doubts as to its success. The "Livre des Voyageurs" used to be a sort of mixture of album, scrap-book, and local guide. It was enriched by sketches of neighbouring objects of interest and of queer incidents of travel. There were polyglot verses, generally so bad as to be amusing, sometimes so good as to be noteworthy, there was a running fire of remarks as to the merits or demerits of particular inns. The entries were often so characteristic that you no longer wondered at the acumen of the persons who profess to judge of character by handwriting, and who doubtless base their judgment as much on the thing written as on the caligraphy or cacography itself. Who could doubt that "Mr Ephraim Higgs of Bigville, Mass.," who recorded the names of his numerous family in large letters with

thick downstrokes and thin upstrokes; who thought it necessary to notify to the world at large that the Higgs party included a courier and two maids, and that the champagne was far inferior to dry Catawba,—was a *nouveau riche* who had got the better of his neighbours in transactions connected with oil? How obvious it was that those complimentary observations as to the kindness of the curé and the advice of the local *juge de la paix* emanated from unprotected females of uncertain age! There were gushing descriptions of scenery, crammed full of adjectives, by honeymooning couples, to whom everything was still rose-colour; there were business-like accounts of dangerous mountain ascents, in which the passage over masked crevasses and the climb up ice-pinnacles were drily summarised; and these English statements often contrasted amusingly with the high-flown sentences in which foreigners depicted the terrors of their rather mild excursions. Just as the ancient geographers used to fill up the *terra incognita* of their maps with fearful figures of dragons and other gruesome beasts, so climbers whose acquaintance with mountains is slight are apt to act on the principle "Where you know nothing, place horrors."

Sometimes people broke into sentimental poetry, which their successors ruthlessly parodied. It was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Evolena that I met with a long poem on "Love in a Cottage," containing the lines—

> "Two minds awake, two hearts at rest;
> Two souls that trust above;
> Two beings in one joy are blest;
> Two lives are one in love."

Yet some brutal cynic, untouched by this sketch of domestic felicity, had written underneath—

"Two donkeys nibbling at one thistle;
One cherry for two bites;
Two curs whose hair, in constant bristle,
Betokens constant fights."

At another inn somebody had declared the Asti wine and the corn-cake to be unsurpassable. A subsequent traveller, having indulged in these dainties with disastrous results, expressed his dissent from his predecessor's opinion—

"Distrust this advice, for I find that, in summer, cake
May produce indigestion, and red wine give stomach-ache.
So with this commendation I cannot agree,
Any more than the wine and the cake did with me."

One book contained a whimsical preface in German as to its objects, concluding with this awful imprecation upon anybody defiling its pages with unseemly matter: "May the mountain spirits disturb his slumbers; may creeping things abound in his bed; may his limbs be weary and his feet sore; may the innkeepers give him tough mutton and sour wine, and charge him for it as though he were Lord Sir John, M.P." From that last touch it would seem that "Lord Sir John, M.P.," is regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of bill-paying beings.

At the hotel at Zinal one entry had a melancholy interest. It was made by Lord Francis Douglas in July 1865, and describes, in modest terms, the ascent of a secondary peak of the Gabelhorn. "At the very summit," says the note, "there is an ice-wall about fifteen feet high, which is very thick and overhangs. It took us twenty minutes to cut through it, and with a telescope from Zermatt the hole can be seen through which we crawled." This tunnelling through a cornice of ice, at the top of a peak 13,000 feet high, with the

chance of bringing down the whole mass upon the travellers' heads, must have been risky work, but the unfortunate Lord Francis seems to have enjoyed it thoroughly, for he specially recommends the expedition to others, "as there is some very nice rock climbing, and a steep ice slope." Then comes an entry, "Left here to attempt the ascent of the Gabelhorn, 7th or 8th of July." We know from other sources that it was in the course of this ascent that he fell, with one of his guides, through a frozen wave of snow curling over 5000 feet of vacancy. Happily, the second guide was firmly anchored, the rope was taut and stout, and his strength enabled him to hold up the others. Exactly a week afterwards, Lord Francis perished in descending the Matterhorn. On that occasion the rope broke.

In some old inns the books extended in an unbroken series over more than a century. For instance, at the "Hirsch," at Zug, you could turn to the pages containing the names of the travellers who breakfasted there on the morning of the fall of the Rossberg in 1806, and who were among the five hundred victims of the catastrophe which buried three flourishing villages and destroyed an enormous amount of property. It was curious, too, in this same series of volumes to see what a rush of English travellers to the Continent took place just after the Peace of Paris in 1815, and what strange accounts they had to give of their adventures. Then there were records of what were regarded as tremendous feats of climbing, in the days when Alpine Clubs existed not, when the person who had toiled up Mont Blanc was a hero, and when most mountains still preserved that vague reputation for inaccessibility of which they have since been robbed. Altogether, I cannot help

thinking that the old books had a special value of their own, and I regret that they have made way for the formal register.

I had the luck to be present at one delightful Gathering of the Cantons. This was the Swiss Choral Festival, which is essentially national in its character, and is not a bait to catch the money of foreigners. It used to take place triennially, and about sixty societies, with an aggregate of 4500 performers—all men—assembled for the great competition at Lucerne. Of all music, unaccompanied part singing is to me the most attractive, and this performance was surprisingly good. It was curious to see the business-like way in which the competition was conducted. The seven Jurors (with whom I was kindly associated) sat in an elevated box in the middle of the enormous hall erected for the occasion, each with a register before him, divided into columns, headed as follows: 1, Balance of voice (*i.e.*, whether there is any undue preponderance of altos, of tenors, or of basses); 2, Tune; 3, Time; 4, Dynamics (execution of crescendo and diminuendo passages); 5, Pronunciation of words; 6, Expression of author's meaning; 7, General effect. As to all these points, marks were assigned independently by each juror, and the excitement was noticeable when some change from major to minor, and back again to major, had furnished a crucial test of skill. The pitch was generally maintained admirably, and the voices rarely became flat, however long and intricate the piece. Almost without exception, the tender sentiment of which we heard so much in Tyrol seemed to find no place in these Swiss part-songs. No society declared Phillis to be its only joy, or loved its love in the morning, or avowed its determination to perish rather than plant a thorn of the

white-blossomed sloe in Chloe's bosom. We had nothing but open-air lays of the mountains, the lake, the breezes, the sunsets, the wanderer's path, and the clacking mill-wheel; and the first prize was gained with a boatman's song about blue waves and bellying sails and the beach near home. Every now and then it was clear that the Swiss conductors had to contend with much the same difficulties as their British brethren. There was the young and strong-lunged bass, who seized the occasion of a pianissimo passage for exhibiting the full force of his voice. There was the quavering old tenor, who introduced little roulades of his own invention at every possible opportunity. There was the aspiring alto, who could not resist the temptation of showing the extent of his register by making a grand finish, just an octave too high. But, as a rule, the individual was very creditably merged in the society. After the great competition, the singers dispersed themselves upon and round the lake; and even when daylight had faded, and the moon silvered the wavelets, still the sound of song came over the water to an accompaniment of the plash of oars; and it was long past midnight before the keel of the last boat grated on the beach, and the "touches of soft harmony" gave place to "sweet silence and the night."

CHAPTER XIII.

ELBERFELD RELIEF SYSTEM.

"WHAT is the Elberfeld system of Poor Law Relief?" This was a question often asked in the early days of the Local Government Board, and stories of its extraordinary success suggested the possibility of its being introduced into this country to remedy some of the admitted drawbacks of our Poor Law Administration. A Parliamentary Paper about it had been issued, but little was known on the subject, so it occurred to me that it would be worth while to investigate it on the spot and to give the results to the public through the *Morning Post*. It was as long ago as 1872 that I made my inquiry, and it is curious that the methods which I then found in operation have continued without any material change at the present day, and are still the frequent subject of papers by Social Reformers at our Poor Law Conferences and elsewhere.

Elberfeld was then, as now, the most prosperous manufacturing town of North Germany, with a population of about seventy-two thousand, which has since more than doubled. To tourists it was not attractive; indeed it would be difficult to find a less inviting or more evil-smelling place. Under the windows of the principal hotel a river gave forth horribly pungent ex-

halations from a fluid compared with which even the Irwell is a silvery stream. The well-wooded country around would have been pretty if the foliage had not shown unmistakable signs of the havoc wrought by smoke and chemical fumes. But my objects were practical, not æsthetic, and Elberfeld was reputed to have successfully grappled with one of the greatest social problems of the day by an organisation which abolished all but absolutely unavoidable pauperism.

I learned that although since the beginning of the century the municipality had been charged with the administration of relief, it was not until 1850 that a resolute effort was made to improve upon the Bureau de Bienfaisance, from which alms were doled out in the Rhenish Provinces in the days of the first French Empire. In that year the town was divided into sixty districts, to each of which was assigned a visitor acting as unpaid relieving officer. As each of these visitors had the supervision of something like eight hundred persons, and as the allowances were not governed by any stringent regulations, it was soon found that the town funds were being lavishly spent on pauperising the community. The privilege of being charitable with other people's money was pretty generally abused, and complaints were so numerous that many of the visitors gave up their office in disgust. Then the poor of the abandoned districts came in crowds to the Town Hall to clamour for relief, which had to be given without any inquiry at all; and the scenes which took place there became so scandalous that some strong measures of reform were obviously indispensable. A twelfth of the whole population had become pauperised, and the amount spent on outdoor relief was more than £7000 a-year.

To the chief banker of the town, Herr von Heydt, belongs the credit of having devised the existing system, and his great personal popularity and unsparing energy enabled him to enlist sufficient support among his fellow-citizens to carry it to a triumphant issue. He divided the town into eighteen districts, varying in point of size and of general population, but all comprising about the same number of poor. Each was sub-divided into fourteen quarters, and each quarter was assigned to one visitor, who was made responsible for the care of the poor within it. The size of the quarter varied according to the wealth or poverty of the residents. The principal street, for instance, in which a pauper would be unlikely to live, formed a single quarter. A large lodging-house for workingmen, on the other hand, is divided between two visitors, each half of the house constituting a quarter. Every visitor has thus the supervision of only a very few—perhaps six or eight—families likely to need attention, and can make himself intimately acquainted with their circumstances by very little expenditure of time. Once a fortnight indeed he has to attend a meeting presided over by a head-visitor, who is responsible to the Municipal Committee for the relief administered. But it is evident that the duty of seeing that half a dozen families are not in need of the bare necessaries of life, and of making a fortnightly return—often a nil return—of the pauperism in possibly only three or four houses, is not onerous enough to interfere with ordinary private business. Accordingly, although by the law every citizen is compelled to accept the post if appointed to it, as a general rule it is rather sought after than avoided. And owing to the sense of public duty which prevails, no difficulty whatever is experienced in keep-

ing up this large staff of 252 unpaid agents, among whom are to be found almost all classes of the community. Merchants, tradesmen, clerks, engineers, superior mechanics, alike fulfil the functions of *Armenpfleger*, and this association for a common object is said to promote good feeling among different classes. Ministers of all denominations are excluded, as it is held that the administration of relief is a civil duty which ought not to be confounded with the discharge of spiritual functions; that the clergy, in fact, should not be called upon to "serve tables." Butchers, bakers, grocers, and publicans are also disqualified on the ground that their dealings with their poorer customers might make them partial. Women too were ineligible, perhaps because they are inclined to be soft-hearted where they ought to be hard-headed; but I understand that they are now admitted to take a rather subordinate share in the administration. The reports are submitted to a meeting of the Municipal Committee which is also held fortnightly, and is attended by the head-visitors of all the eighteen districts. This Committee passes the accounts, furnishes each head-visitor with the sum which it is estimated will be required for his district during the following fortnight, and satisfies itself that the relief has been granted in accordance with the rigid conditions prescribed. In those conditions, as embodied in the Instructions to visitors, and in their strict application by persons intimately acquainted with the circumstances of each particular case of alleged distress, is to be found the secret of the success of the Elberfeld system.

The Instructions to the visitors are very precise. The only persons who may be granted more than temporary relief are those who are absolutely incapable

of work (*Arbeitsunfähige*), who derive no help from private charity, and whose relations are unable to pay anything towards their support. Parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, are mutually bound to maintain each other, and the fulfilment of this duty is stringently enforced, in proportion to the means of the contributor. People that can work and desire to evade work are made to work; and the able-bodied pauper cannot obtain relief unless he shows that he has done his best to procure employment, but without success. And labour is at such a premium in Elberfeld that this condition can scarcely ever be complied with. If, however, the labour market should chance to be overstocked, the Municipality would itself furnish employment upon public works, although at the very lowest rate of wages sufficient for a bare subsistence. The visitor is bound to put to each applicant for relief a formulated string of questions as to his last work, his present circumstances, the cause of his distress, his birthplace, his family connections, and so on. And it is only by satisfying the visitor and the relief committee that there are no other means by which he can be supported that anything at all is done for him by the administration. At the time of my inquiry a maximum amount of relief, whether given in money or in kind, was 2s. 6d. a-week for a single person, and 10s. 3d. a-week for a family of five children. But it was anticipated that the great rise in the price of the necessaries would require the adoption of a higher scale, and I understand that this increase has actually taken place: that a single adult now gets 3s. 6d., and a man and wife with five children receive about 15s., less whatever may be the amount of their earnings, which the visitor has to deduct from their allowance.

In 1872, less than two per cent of the population were in receipt of ordinary relief instead of eight per cent as under previous arrangements. The number actually upon the books of the administration on my visit was 915 in 431 different families. Although the population had increased in the previous twenty years by nearly one-half, the expenditure had sunk from about £9000 to less than £4000 per annum. In addition to this, however, must be reckoned the cost of medical relief, averaging from £400 to £500 a-year, of the Orphanage (corresponding more nearly with the Foundling Hospital than with any other English institution), and of the Poorhouse, which is a sort of infirmary in which such paupers as are permanently incapacitated for work find an asylum in which they may peacefully smoke away their declining years.

This system seems to have been carried on with very little change up to the present time.[1] The population of the town has more than doubled, and is now over 150,000. The cost, and also the number of persons relieved, and of visitors (of whom there are now over 500), have increased in corresponding proportions. In the year 1900 about 1900 cases were assisted, at a cost of about £11,400. These figures, however, do not include the expenditure upon the Orphanage, the Asylum for Imbeciles, or the Poorhouse, which together stand for some £8000 more, thus making an aggregate

[1] The particulars given in this paragraph are taken from a paper read before the Yorkshire Poor Law Conference in 1903 by the Rev. T. T. Broad, Guardian of the Sheffield Union. If they are accurate an extraordinary reduction in both amount and cost of pauperism in Elberfeld has taken place since Messrs J. S. Davy, C. S. Loch, and Hanewinkel made their official investigation at Elberfeld in 1888, the report on which was published as a Parliamentary Paper. The proportion of pauperism was then 28 per thousand, and the cost 4s. 0½d. per thousand. Many Unions in England do better than that.

charge of £19,400, or about 2s. 7d. per head of the population.

This is indeed an admirable result, and the actual saving of money is by no means its most important feature. The sense of citizenship and its obligations must be very high to produce, in a town of 150,000 inhabitants, more than 500 both willing and competent to devote themselves to this very responsible work, and trustworthy enough to be almoners of public funds. With recent experience of the doings of the elected guardians of the poor in East London and elsewhere, we cannot help having a humiliating doubt whether the same sort of organisation in this country would be filled by eager workers, as remote from any suspicion of selfish interest or of jobbery as those Elberfeld visitors. And then we must remember that even in Germany the system has become by no means universal, although it has been introduced with modifications into four or five large towns. Moreover, when Dr Aschrott, the distinguished Prussian economist, was sent over by his Government to investigate the English Poor Law system, his elaborate and indeed exhaustive report was altogether in favour of that system, and recommended its adoption in Germany, without any modification on Elberfeld lines.

In several English towns, without any attempt to supersede the existing administration, means have been taken to supplement it by some such amateur machinery as that of Elberfeld. The great drawback of our own Poor Law is that, as a general rule, the paid official has far more cases than he can properly inquire into. As Greg has said, "When a thorough knowledge and a close and searching investigation into every case of alleged want offer the only possible means of con-

trolling pauperism and unmasking imposture, we in our miserable vestry spirit of parsimony make all such investigation a mockery and an impossibility by assigning hundreds of families to one relieving officer." Besides, everybody who has been present when relief cases come before Boards of Guardians knows that there are many which ought not to be pauperised, and it is an immense advantage to have a society willing to investigate such cases and to relieve them if suitable from charitable funds voluntarily raised, or perhaps by assisting them in friendly fashion to obtain employment. Guilds of Help or Charity Organisation Societies may in this way fulfil a most useful function if their inquiries are thorough, and if, not content to administer doles broadcast, they make it their guiding principle to help the poor to help themselves.

A good many people are apt to forget that it is not by small gifts of money that the poor are really benefited. The principles of Defoe's 'Giving Alms No Charity' need enforcement now almost as much as they did in the eighteenth century. Miss Octavia Hill has devoted herself to the poor of London with as much success as anybody of her generation. But she always set herself resolutely against doles. Perhaps her most beneficial undertaking was that of assuming the management of a large number of courts and tenement houses in poor districts, and placing them in charge of persons more or less interested in the condition of the poor. I was for some time one of her rent-collectors for a court near Drury Lane, and used to call on each tenant weekly for payment. It was a strict rule that in ordinary circumstances (apart, of course, from incapacitating illness) no remission was to be made, and it might be thought that the very sight of a collector

would be unpleasant to the tenants. But, on the contrary, though the money was paid with at least as much regularity as elsewhere, I do not hesitate to say that we were usually regarded as their friends. The collection of the rent gave us a sort of *locus standi* which would have been denied to a stranger. We were consulted as to all kinds of domestic and family affairs, and, for example, I have even been asked by a husband to overcome his wife's reluctance to go to hospital for an operation. I found that she had a fixed idea that operations in hospital were mere experiments for the instruction of the students; but I was able to convince her that she would have the skill of one of the first surgeons of the day, for whose services only rich men could afford to pay; and eventually she sought admission and was treated with the happiest results. I have no doubt that all Miss Hill's rent-collectors could quote instances of the same kind, in which a little common-sense advice was more useful than money, and probably one of the best points of the Elberfeld system is its promotion of this sort of friendly intercourse with the poor.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOURNALISM — IMPERIALISTS AT CHISLEHURST — THE PRINCESS OF WALES AT MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE — SHAH — AMSTERDAM RIOTS — 'THE CHURCH AND THE LAND.'

Several of my journalistic journeys, besides the one to Elberfeld, were of rather more than passing interest. Among the functions at which I was present was that of depositing the remains of Napoleon III. in the sarcophagus which, as its inscription records, was "offered to the Empress Eugénie as a mark of affectionate sympathy by Victoria R." The little chapel at Chislehurst was thronged on the occasion. Grey-haired men, who had been humble adherents of the Empire in its days of prosperity; women, eager to seize an opportunity for displaying their sympathy with the widow and the exile; here a French soldier in uniform, there a knot of children babbling stories of kindly greetings received from the Emperor in his woodside walks,— many of these waited patiently for hours on the chance of obtaining admission. It was intended that the ceremony should be private, and a general intimation to this effect had been given, so those who took part in the proceedings were mostly connected either by relationship or by domestic ties with the family. The Prince

Imperial occupied a seat immediately in front of the altar, and ranged in stalls at the side were the Princes of the House of Bonaparte. Most of the congregation were in deep mourning, though here and there a flash of colour was strangely conspicuous in the general gloom. Upon the coffin, covered with its pall of purple velvet, dotted with golden bees, rested a magnificent bouquet of violets sent over by the workmen of Paris. Tears glistened in the eyes of the young Prince, the widow was kneeling overwhelmed with the sense of her position, and the scene was impressive. When High Mass had been sung the body was borne across to the Mausoleum, and as the undertaker's men clambered over the staging in order to raise the coffin, the Prince turned away with a shudder. The procession of priests entered the Mausoleum and chanted a service; the Bishop of Southwark sprinkled holy water and what seemed to be ashes on the coffin; then the Empress crossed the chancel with the Prince Imperial, and the widow and the son of the dead man gazed for a few moments in silence on the grave. And as they stood there it was noticed that the sun shone out, lighting up the scene as if with one sad smile.

Only a few months later I found myself again at Chislehurst on the occasion of the coming of age of the Prince Imperial. In the hall at Camden Place were collected the most illustrious adherents of the House of Bonaparte. In the palmiest days of the Tuileries it would have been hard to bring together a more loyal assemblage, for here were the staunch friends of adversity, not merely the butterflies of success. Out of the 89 Prefects of Departments whom the Emperor had appointed, no less than 62 had journeyed to Chislehurst to express their unabated allegiance to his family. At first the

proceedings were absolutely informal. The Empress and the Prince walked unceremoniously among their guests, engaging here in animated conversation with some ardent politician, pausing there to say a few pleasant words to some old acquaintance. M. Rouher, to whom one felt inclined to apply the old saying about Lord Eldon—that no one can really be so wise as Lord Eldon looked,—seemed to be always engaged in conversation of the deepest earnestness, and it was hard to identify this grave statesman with the Minister whose persiflage had so often turned off with a jest the heaviest attack of such antagonists as Thiers, Berryer, and Jules Favre. Prince Murat, whose various experiences of shipwreck and prison and manifold hardships seemed to have in nowise impaired his activity, greeted old acquaintances with cheery heartiness. There was the Marquis de la Valette, most celebrated perhaps as the author of the circular on the affairs of Germany which created so much commotion upon its issue in 1866, but who was known to Englishmen as the last of the Imperial Ambassadors at the Court of St James's. There was the Duc de Bassano, acting as Chamberlain, with step and manner vividly recalling Lord Sydney. There was M. Paul de Cassagnac in his double capacity of *ancien deputé* and journalist, there were a score more personages who had been concerned in making history in France. Finally, there was a characteristic representative of the Dames de la Halle, who was conspicuous with violet dress, violet bonnet, and face purple with excitement, who took a prominent position at the front of the platform and bestowed energetic nods of approval as the young Prince spoke his very effective address. Between three and four thousand people attended, and by extra-

ordinary good organisation were all hospitably entertained. Most of them imagined that the day might become memorable in the history of the world as that on which the strength of the House of Bonaparte, and the devotion to that House still to be found among the French nation, had received proof conclusive enough to denote the policy of the future. Five years afterwards the assegai of the Zulu destroyed hopes which had seemed so well founded, and probably gave permanence to Republican Government in France.

Another pleasant if less memorable trip was to Marlborough, when the Prince and Princess of Wales, who had been staying with the Marquess and Marchioness of Ailesbury at Savernake, paid a State visit to the quaint old town, and especially to its famous public school. One amusing incident is worth recalling. The Princess, who declined to be content with a perfunctory examination and was anxious to learn as much as possible of the habitat and the ways of that singular animal the British schoolboy, opened one of the desks, of which long rows stretch up and down the big schoolroom. In making an imaginary inventory of the contents one would be inclined to include eight or ten books, a piece of string, some toffy and some oranges. Not a bit of it. There was nothing whatever inside but a large piece of paper with the word "Bagged" written across it in big round characters, with the name —let us say Jones—underneath. Her Royal Highness requested an explanation, but none of the Royal party could solve the riddle, and it was not until special inquiry had been made that it appeared that on the boys' return (which had only taken place on the previous day) their first care is to "bag," or, in more elaborate phrase, to appropriate, desks in a con-

venient position, and that by custom of immemorial standing the mere deposit of a document such as that discovered by the Princess had secured to Jones, for that term only, as full a right and title to the desk in question as if a lease of it had been granted him and his property had been placed therein accordingly.

When the Shah of Persia came to England it was considered that, for diplomatic reasons, he must be received with the greatest honours. On his arrival at Dover the Lord Warden Hotel was kept for his private occupation, and I went down to see him land on our shores. The usual practice of setting a Mayor and Recorder to fire off an address at every distinguished and sea-sick foreigner was not omitted, for though the Shah begged to be left in peace the municipality insisted on their rights, and the potentate had to yield. He was one blaze of jewels, and his aigrette of diamonds is now a thing of history.

A few days later I was present at the Naval Review which was held for his special benefit, and was lucky enough to be favoured with a place on one of the Royal Yachts, where I made acquaintance with an Austrian officer, who was the Shah's Commander-in-Chief and was glad to hear his own language spoken even with a British accent. I was assured that what had struck the Persians most in England was not the Nasmyth hammer, nor the ironclads, nor the soldiers, nor the steam-mills; it was the ladies. You might live in Persia for a dozen years and not see more than a little bit of the countenance of any woman except your own wife, or wives. Partly because of the glare and the dust, partly from convention, a female face unveiled was there unknown. And here it was not so much the young women who charmed the

Oriental eye by their loveliness, as the matrons who delighted it by their comeliness. "There," said my friend, pointing towards the crowd of excursionists who were trying to stare us out of countenance from the paddle-box of their steamer, "see that lady of five-and-forty, with the red cloak, red cheeks, and an air of unbounded good-humour; it is a face like that, not wizened, not shrivelled, not sharpened and care-worn, that makes us Easterns marvel and admire. Probably the incident most astonishing to the Shah has been to see the ladies riding. And one of them, be it said, he saw very close indeed in your Park, for her horse reared as his carriage was passing and she fell back nearly into his arms." It was curious to hear an account of the journey through Russia, and of the Shah's first sight of a ball, with dancers whom he supposed to be nautch girls but who were really princesses and countesses; of the defection of the Grand Mollah, or high priest, who went home in disgust at the laxity[1] in religious ceremonies during the journey; of the reactionary party whose designs were understood and had been hitherto baffled, but who nevertheless caused the Shah and his advisers no small uneasiness; of the domestic life, or rather the absence of domestic life, under a polygamous system, and so on.

It was by a happy chance that I was at Amsterdam during the celebrated week of rioting, and for the first time acquired some personal experience of a collision

[1] It was said, with I know not how much truth, that the Shah not only refused to be bound by the rules of the Prophet in the matter of wine-bibbing, but was inclined to follow the example of our forefathers, and now and then to "make a night of it." "C'est juste," remarked a Frenchman to whom these bibulous tendencies were related; "on connait le proverbe, 'la nuit tous les Chats sont gris.'"

between the military and the mob. The whole outbreak was sneered at as a storm in a tea-pot. But the capital of Holland is rather a big tea-pot, and a storm resulting in the killing of two men and the wounding of fifty others so badly that they had to be sent to hospital must be reckoned as more than a mere breeze. The origin of the disturbance was trivial enough. Holland had for centuries been celebrated for fairs rivalling those of Nijni Novgorod and of Leipsic. Foremost among them was that of Amsterdam, which used to last for three weeks, and to which giants, dwarfs, fat ladies, spotted negroes, fire-eaters, conjurers, English boxers, Swiss wrestlers, and Italian acrobats swarmed in great numbers. But the Dutch authorities found that these merry-makings were seized upon by the population generally as an excuse for a prolonged bout of drinking, so they grew virtuous and declared that cakes and ale should be no more. They cut down the Amsterdam fair to a fortnight, then to a week, and finally they gave notice of its total abolition. The result was that they were inundated, first with petitions and then with threatening letters. "Were the rich to roll in their carriages to the theatres while the only amusement of the poor was cut off? Were the people to be made sober by the decrees of wine-swilling, gourmandising aldermen? The men of the city would show themselves! They would massacre the Town Council; they would take the furniture of the grand houses and sell it at a new fair." But the civic authorities were deaf alike to memorials and menaces. They applied for a reinforcement of the garrison, and ordered the Schutterij, or Civic Guard, to be ready for action. When I walked through the town the streets were filled with gangs of roughs,

marching five or six abreast and singing at the top of their voices a short poem which a Dutch laureate had composed for the occasion. This, if not inspired by any high flight of imagination, was at any rate terse and forcible, for it consisted simply of the words,

"Hop, hop, hop,
Hang den Burgemeester op."

But as the Burgomaster wisely kept indoors they had no opportunity of suspending him to a lamp-post; so it was thought probable that everything might pass off quietly after all. But the police noticed as a significant fact that the men known to be the prime movers of sedition were conspicuously absent; and this seemed to make it likely that a storm was brewing. So quiet householders went to bed in some anxiety. Just before midnight we heard the roll of the drum and the trumpet-call to arms, and found that rioting had begun. The attack started with the big houses in the neighbourhood of the Palace, of which over a hundred had their windows broken in this one night. The troops made repeated charges on the crowd, and among those wounded were various innocent spectators. A proclamation had prohibited the assembling of more than five persons at one place in the street, and wherever a knot of half a dozen could be found there a furious charge was made. Perhaps the most unlucky case was that of the clerks from the Town Hall, who, after working for the peace of the city from nine in the morning till twelve at night, were proceeding in a body to their homes when they were set upon by a detachment of troops from Utrecht, and stoutly belaboured. I was made a member of the English club on the *Dam*, a word which here represents not an anathema but the

chief square of the city, and it was rather interesting to see from the club balcony the evolutions of the military and the mob. One tremendously stout officer in command of a detachment got chaffed so unmercifully that he lost his temper, rushed out from the ranks into the middle of the crowd, and flourished his sabre over their heads in dire menace, on which vigorous attack they dispersed. Then he took out a large red pocket-handkerchief and carefully wiped his weapon before returning it to its sheath. It was only wetted by the fast falling rain, but the action seemed to suggest that the gore of his victims had to be wiped off, and the spectators laughed outrageously. Presently the Hussars charged down a street close to the club and smote the rioters with the flat of their sabres, drawing blood in a few cases, and knocking down the people right and left. As the street was paved with asphalt, however, and was rather wet, it was not well-suited for a cavalry charge, and the horse of one of the troopers fell, throwing his rider rather badly. As soon as the soldiers went down one street the rioters bolted up another, and broke the windows there, so a good deal of wanton and foolish destruction of property took place. The Jewish workmen, who inhabit a special quarter of their own, had resolutely refused to participate in the movement; and this so irritated the insurgents that they proceeded to one of the Jews' streets, broke the windows of half a dozen houses, and threatened to return to break the rest. But the astute Children of Israel were too much for the Gentiles, and on the next night, when the latter approached the Jewish quarter, they found all the bridges over the canals drawn up; so the Jews were on an island of their own and perfectly secure from an attack. It

was not until the fourth night that the rioting ceased; and some considerable pecuniary damage must have been caused by it, to say nothing of the personal injuries and loss of life. In London it would have been put down by the police in half an hour.

I devoted part of another autumn vacation to inquiries as to the effect of the agricultural depression on the condition of the clergy; and by visits to four or five dioceses where glebe was the chief source of clerical income I obtained some striking facts, which appeared in a series of about a dozen articles in the *Morning Post*, and were afterwards republished in book form by Rivingtons under the title of 'The Church and the Land.' A good many circumstances had combined to depress the incomes of incumbents. Of these, half a century ago, there were less than six thousand, but at the time of my investigation the number had, owing to the abolition of pluralities and the creation of new parishes, risen to between thirteen and fourteen thousand. Of the entire number of livings, more than one-third are even nominally worth less than £200 a-year, considerably more than one-half are worth less than £300, and only about one-sixth are of even the reputed value of £500. Assuming therefore that the entire number were to be distributed impartially and with mathematical accuracy among all clergymen, whether possessing talent and interest or not, and assuming also that each man would remain a curate as long as half the term of an average clerical career, it has been calculated that only one in five would have the chance of ever obtaining a benefice worth £500 a-year, and less than one-half would have the chance of one worth £300. And as there is a demand that they should be filled by married men of education,

it is inevitable that cases of acute hardship should arise when incomes fall. Those depending upon tithes have suffered least, although among them I may cite the case of a clergyman who had married on appointment to a living worth £200 a-year and a house, but the tithe rent-charge had fallen in a dozen years to £154, and was falling still. Yet a family had to be provided for, and expenses of all kinds were increasing. Much worse, however, was the case of incumbents, like most of those in the Midlands, whose incomes were almost entirely derived from glebe. Land that used to be eagerly competed for by farmers willing to take it at 40s. or 50s. an acre was either tenantless, with no offers to rent it at any price, or fetched some 10s. or 15s. an acre. Some of these clergymen were struggling on, perhaps spending their own scanty means in that most hopeless and ruinous occupation, amateur farming; others were vainly seeking for curacies; and various livings were vacant because it was impossible to find incumbents for them.

In the diocese of Ely I found that the average amount of glebe is 88 acres to each benefice, and some have ten or twelve times that amount. In twenty, with an average of 350 acres each, realising in good times 35s. an acre, or an income of about £600 a-year, the rent had sunk to 11s. an acre, or £186 to each benefice, even this sum being subject to large deductions for charges of various kinds. In one, the Rector, at the age of eighty-three, found his means of living suddenly reduced from £180 to £40 a-year. Another, in very similar circumstances, died heart-broken, not so much from regret at the loss of personal comfort as from distress at being no longer able to help his people; and I could not avoid think-

ing that, in the words of Eöthen, "the old [illegible] had got rather well out of the scrape of being alive and poor."

I became acquainted with some really pitiable cases of acute poverty, which had overtaken thoroughly worthy men after many years of hard work among their parishioners. Indeed, in many instances the clergy had suffered more from agricultural depression than the tenant-farmers themselves. Fortunately, although they have ill-endowed livings, many have well-endowed wives, otherwise they would certainly be quite unable to bring up their families decently. I suppose that, in Shirley Brooks's phrase, a good many young ladies feel a desire to be very pious when they hear the organ playing in church, and it occurs to them that the simplest way of fulfilling this aspiration is to marry curates. But after all, the majority are poor men; and the financial disasters which have come upon those without private means have been terribly trying. In a note[1] I reprint a letter pub-

[1] Sir,—Your Special Commissioner's articles have admirably stated the case. I give you now my own experience as a country rector for the last twelve months. A year ago all my glebe, over 400 acres, was unlet. I was obliged to employ an agent whose services, including advertisements, have cost me £35. I have received about £200 in rents. Out of this sum I have to pay £230 for a rent-charge on the glebe, over £20 for land tax, tenths amounting to £2, 7s. to Queen Anne's Bounty, and I know not what else. The benefice was, a few years ago, worth over £600 a-year net; now its value, as you see, is represented by a *minus* quantity. But what can I do? I cannot obtain a curacy, as some objection to my family of seven children, or that I am too old—having been in orders twenty years—is sure to prove a bar. All my insurance policies have had to be surrendered to have something to be going on with, in the hope that better times were coming. My table has been innocent of a joint of meat for the last two months, our dinners at the most being made up from the garden produce, with an occasional slice of bacon. Skim-milk we get certainly at a small price—a penny a quart,—and we have plenty of puddings, rice, sago, &c. Of course we don't starve. As for fuel, we are principally dependent on

it ued in the *Morning Post*, stating pathetically the hardships in a typical instance.

wood. Clothes come from relatives, but several of these are much in the same plight as ourselves. I could name several others in a like position, where *res angustæ domi* necessitate the very strictest economy, even to the watering down of ink and using half a sheet of paper on which to write a polite note. All the time we are not unemployed, but at work from 7 A.M. to 9.30 P.M. I doubt not that what I have written will seem incredible to many, but it is only a very small description of what many are now undergoing. The purchase of a new book or even a magazine is never thought of. Now and then some book is borrowed and eagerly read. The Church papers are never seen ; it is indeed a matter of working for love. I enclose my card, for I have some left from better times, and subscribe myself, for I wish no one but yourself to know who is a

COUNTRY RECTOR.

CHAPTER XV.

PUBLIC HEALTH—MARGATE SEWERAGE—SANDRINGHAM—CHOLERA—SMALL-POX—NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE—JAPANESE COMMISSIONER.

For a good many years after the constitution of the Local Government Board its staff were occupied in the absorbing task of organisation. Some of the chief reforms were in the province of Public Health; and however imperfect may be our sanitary system at the present time, it is impossible to look back at the period of its early evolution without appreciating the forethought of those responsible for its beginnings, and the remarkable success which has attended its development. Macaulay somewhere speaks of men dying faster in the lanes of our towns in the seventeenth century than they died in his time on the coast of Guiana; and an equally effective contrast might be drawn between the rate of mortality when Macaulay wrote and at present. Then it was over twenty-three per thousand; it is now about fifteen or sixteen, and the difference represents, in the existing population, the gain of over 200,000 lives annually. It is significant, too, that the diseases which have shown most diminution are precisely those which are known to be chiefly influenced by sanitary conditions, the typical example being

typhoid fever, which actually causes less than a quarter of the mortality that it did.

The difficulties and complications in establishing the new organisation were endless. In the first place a Medical Officer had to be appointed for every sanitary district in the country, and qualified candidates did not exist. It is true that every Poor Law Union possessed a staff of medical men for the care of sick paupers, but only a small proportion of them knew anything about hygiene, which at that time was scarcely taught in the medical schools; and reasonable skill in superintending entries and exits to and from the world was quite compatible with absolute ignorance of the questions involved in the construction of drains, the value of ventilation, the supply of water, and the prevention of the spread of infectious disease. Moreover, these men were all in private practice, and it was no easy matter for a doctor whose livelihood depended on the fees received from his patients to take measures for the suppression of nuisances which those patients were causing, or for effecting sanitary improvements to which as ratepayers they might be violently opposed. Obviously the most satisfactory plan would have been to carve out the country into districts, or combinations of districts, each sufficient to employ the entire services of a Medical Officer of Health debarred from private practice. But this was a counsel of perfection which at any rate could not be immediately carried out. The possibility, however, was kept in view, and therefore local authorities were required to make all appointments temporary. This practice has, I believe, never been abandoned, so even now Medical Officers hold their posts only for a limited period, with the result that they have no cer-

tain tenure, and have to be careful not to offend their masters, the Urban or Rural Council, lest they should be superseded on the expiration of their term of office. And it must be remembered that the very persons who find it worth their while to secure election are those interested in jerry-building, in trade nuisances, or in some other abuse with which it may be the duty of a Health Officer to interfere.

The arrangement by which half the salaries both of Medical Officers of Health and Inspectors of Nuisances was made payable by the Exchequer in cases where the Local Government Board sanctioned the appointments was no doubt designed to give the central department some control over the amount of remuneration. But in practice this was left entirely to what is called the discretion of the Local Authority, and it often happened that the Board thus assumed liability for an arrangement under which the pay was absurdly inadequate. The wit of man has not yet devised a system under which responsibility can be duly adjusted between the local body appointing and the central body approving.

One substantial alteration of sanitary practice took place in an unexpected fashion. A complaint from a Medical Inspector of the Privy Council that a particular Sanitary Authority had neglected its duty of providing sewerage or water for its district used to be sufficient ground for an Order from the Home Secretary requiring the work to be done. But when the Medical Inspectors were absorbed in the staff of the Local Government Board, it was held that a representation from them to their own official superiors would not satisfy the law; and thus, in default of a local petition, the Board was powerless. So, where people cared less for their health

than for their pockets, it now and then happened that sanitary measures of urgency could not be forced on a district because none of the inhabitants made formal complaint of the unhealthy conditions in which they were living.

Perhaps the most flagrant instance of this sort was that of Margate. That town stood for a long time almost alone among popular watering-places in being without any system of drainage. A Medical Inspector reported that the cesspools were estimated to cover an aggregate extent of three acres, many being under houses and discharging foul air into them, the sewage sometimes even welling up through the floors. Some years later a second report was made, and it was found that in spite of many letters from Whitehall nothing effectual had been done except to increase the number of cesspools. The Corporation had, it is true, employed an engineer to devise a proper system of sewerage, and they had even obtained Government sanction to a loan for the purpose. But this effort exhausted their energy. The loan was not raised, and the plans were put aside. Then the increasing amount of mortality from typhoid fever of extraordinary virulence gave occasion for yet another inspection, and the report described the disease as solely due to the sanitary defects of the town. This report, like those previously made, seemed likely also to be ignored, for the Corporation had found that visitors swarmed to the place, intent only on holiday and perfectly indifferent to sanitation, so why should the rates be raised for a mere question of health?

I was so deeply impressed by the importance of the case that as a Government department had failed it occurred to me to try whether a newspaper would be more successful. So I wrote an article in the *Morning*

Post putting the case pretty forcibly, and warning intending visitors to Margate that it was undesirable to spend a holiday in the midst of some thousands of cess-pools. I pointed out that if these accumulations of filth were distributed over an open field the place would be shunned, and that they were not the less offensive and dangerous because concealed by buildings or because the effluvia were discharged into sitting-rooms and bed-rooms instead of into the outside air. I also called attention to the fact that the water-supply was reported as being exposed to serious risk of pollution, and I represented that the public might find by sad experience that if they chose this particular watering-place for a holiday the sea-breezes might not overcome the dangers of foul air and water. This article created much stir locally, and elicited a defence from the Medical Officer of Health, who however did not dispute the accuracy of the official report. His letter furnished occasion for a second article in the *Post*, strongly emphasising the need for action on the part of the Corporation; and the result was just what I had hoped for. Margate was taboo that year; the proprietor of the principal hotel declared that the confounded newspaper had cost him a couple of thousand pounds by the falling off in visitors; tradesmen and lodging-house keepers were in despair; and the inhabitants generally, persuaded that they would be ruined unless immediate action were taken, were as eager in calling for drainage as they had previously been in opposing it. The sanitary reform was thorough; and I was able to plume myself on having capped the efforts of my Department to obtain this result.

Our very small medical staff was at that period unable to investigate the condition of any considerable number

of districts. But it became clear from the reports on various areas selected for inspection that in many places even the most elementary measures for the protection of the public health were absolutely lacking. It was disquieting to learn from one such report that if a district out of all England had to be named in which the sanitary administration was utterly bad, in which infectious disease was allowed to spread unchecked, while nuisances flourished without interference, that district was the one including the country residence of the Heir to the Throne. The Union of which the parish of Sandringham forms part was then destitute of all the machinery required by law for the suppression of infectious disease. The Sanitary Authority had contented themselves with a mere colourable compliance with the statutory requirements that they should appoint a Medical Officer of Health and an Inspector of Nuisances; and the terms of both appointments were such as to make it evident that these officials were expected to do nothing. The Medical Officer indeed was not paid by salary but by fees, and was to receive them only when specially called in. Successive outbreaks of scarlet fever raged for long periods, but he was only "called in" on three occasions, and three visits to a single parish constituted his entire work for nearly three years. So-called Inspectors of Nuisances received some trifling payments, and even reported a very few particularly bad cases. But as the Authority took no action, every sort of abomination flourished. The surroundings of the cottages were in many cases indescribably filthy, some being unapproachable on account of their horrible foulness, while the water-supply was dangerously polluted. I believe that at the present time the condition of the cottages, not only on the

Sandringham estate but in the district generally, compares favourably with that of most others. But it is curious to recall its condition before the principles of modern sanitation had been introduced.

It is worth noting that in those days both Windsor and the neighbourhood of Cowes were similarly made subjects of skilled inspection, and in each instance sanitary defects of a grave character were found to exist at no great distance from the residence of the Sovereign. Investigations of this sort had their effect on public health administration generally; for the reports received wide publicity through the press, and people began dimly to understand that the law gave them a right at least to some essentials of healthy existence, so a good many supine authorities were thus stirred into action.

Then came the scare of cholera on the Continent, and when in the summer of 1884 this dreaded disease showed itself in various French and Spanish ports in the Mediterranean, there was evident ground for alarm. This was not diminished by the attempts at secrecy maintained by the authorities as to various outbreaks near our shores. It used to be said that if a fatal epidemic were to sweep off all the inhabitants of a French Colony except the Governor, that functionary, when himself attacked, would undoubtedly devote his last moments to writing a despatch denying its existence. And so, when cholera was raging in Finistère, and also on the outskirts of Paris, the French Government pretended that the health of the country was excellent. But the information received by the Medical Department of the Local Government Board showed that the danger was imminent, and they pressed for such an increase in the staff of inspectors as would enable us at least to see that

our ports were in a condition to take proper measures against the importation of infection.

Fortunately Sir Charles Dilke had become President of the Board, and carried with him a political weight which his two worthy but not particularly influential predecessors, Sclater-Booth and Dodson, had not enjoyed. He had one or two passages of arms with Childers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when it was attempted to interfere with the estimates which he had put forward and which he declined to defend in Parliament if they were curtailed. There was an appeal to the Premier, and Sir Charles Dilke had come off victorious. So when he proposed largely to increase the Medical Staff in order to make a Sanitary Survey of the entire coast, the Treasury's sanction was given, and the work was carried out with far-reaching results. The authorities of the ports were to some extent brought into line; they were impressed with a sense of their responsibilities; not only did they organise special arrangements for the inspection of ships from infected countries, but they also recognised the necessity of setting their own houses in order in a literal sense, and many of them for the first time displayed activity in providing pure water, efficient sewerage, and a system of prompt removal of nuisances. All this could not be done at once, but the communications of the Board's experts with the local authorities and their officers had an admirably stimulating effect, and did something more than lay the foundation of that Public Health System, at the imperfections of which we habitually grumble, but which has nevertheless saved us from any epidemic of cholera during the last quarter of a century, and has reduced the mortality from prevent-

able diseases to a rate which such countries as France and Germany may well envy.

Many of the other investigations undertaken by the Medical Staff were of the highest value, and some of the results were curious. Thus it used to be considered that as regards infection small-pox was much on a par with other diseases; that as the London Fever Hospital during the many years of its existence had never spread fever to the houses round it, so small-pox might be isolated safely in properly constructed wards. But Mr (now Sir W. H.) Power, after exhaustive inquiries, came to the conclusion that the germs of small-pox, unlike those of any other disease, are capable of dissemination through the air, irrespectively of personal intercourse, to the distance of at least a mile, and it is at present the Board's rule to sanction loans for the erection of small-pox hospitals only in places where there are no houses in their vicinity. It was Mr Power, too, who made some important discoveries as to the relation of scarlatina with infected milk, while the report of Dr (afterwards Sir Richard) Thorne Thorne upon Hospitals was widely useful.

Another question which then occupied much attention was that of securing the notification of infectious disease. If an outbreak occurred among cattle or pigs the law required it to be at once reported to the local authority. But scarlatina, typhoid, or small-pox might be epidemic without its being anybody's duty to communicate the fact to the body responsible for dealing with it. In 1876 the Corporation of Huddersfield had persuaded Parliament to allow them to insert in a local Act a provision requiring every case of certain specified diseases to be notified to their Medical Officer by the

practitioner in attendance, who was to receive a fee for his trouble. Various other towns followed this example, and in the portion of the Board's Annual Reports which it happened to be my official duty to write, I was allowed to bring into prominence the success of the new method, while both in the *Times* and the *Morning Post*, in articles which I contributed on sanitary subjects, I strongly advocated its extension. At first there were all sorts of objections. It was said to be an invasion of private rights to compel a man to communicate to a public body the occurrence of a case of disease in his family. It was prophesied that people would abstain from seeking medical advice in order to secure concealment, and not only would the sick be neglected, but the spread of infection would be promoted. It was gravely argued that there would be an unwarrantable interference in the relations between doctor and patient, and that it would be unprofessional to disclose the secrets of the sick-bed. Moreover, was there not danger that sick persons would be torn from their homes by an arbitrary authority and removed to a hospital to die among strangers?

Happily these objections proved to be merely fanciful. Parents did not show themselves willing, for the sake of secrecy, to sacrifice their children rather than summon a medical man, and they found that notification entailed no more publicity than was involved in a visit from the Health Officer. As to the confidential relations between practitioners and patients, the medical profession soon came pretty unanimously to the conclusion that as the law already required them to certify the cause of death in the case of a patient who had drunk himself into a fatal attack of *delirium tremens*, they might well, without any violation of confidence, certify that a child had

been infected by scarlatina. It is possible that the acceptance of this view was helped by the consideration that the fees for notification would put satisfactory sums into the pockets of the profession. Finally, the objection that notification would involve the compulsory removal to hospital of persons attacked was disposed of by the answer that in the first place the only additional power conferred on authorities was that of acquiring information, and in the second place that the advantages of hospital over home treatment had come to be so generally recognised that the question was, not how to compel patients to go to hospital, but how to provide accommodation for those anxious to obtain admission.

The Notification system spread with surprising rapidity. In the course of about ten years over fifty large towns obtained Parliamentary sanction for applying it to their inhabitants, and by the year 1889 its usefulness had become so generally recognised that the President of the Local Government Board was able, without any difficulty, to carry a general measure on the subject. This Act made Notification compulsory in the Metropolis, and allowed all provincial sanitary authorities to adopt it by simple Resolution without the formalities and expense of obtaining a Private Act for the purpose. Most authorities hastened to avail themselves of their new power, and in less than three years the system had been extended to about three-quarters of the districts and about five-sixths of the population of the whole country. The time had nearly come for it to be made universal, and this was done by an Act of 1899. It seems to us now astounding that local administrators were content for so long to remain in ignorance of the existence of the very diseases with which they had to cope; and there is no doubt that in

scores of instances serious epidemics have been prevented by measures rendered possible only by the prompt information of the first outbreak.

It is perhaps worth while to mention that in 1884 the Japanese Government, anxious to be in the forefront of civilisation in sanitary as in other matters, sent over a Commissioner to investigate our system. Mr Nagai was referred by the Foreign Office to the Local Government Board, who placed him in my hands; and for a considerable period I had the pleasure of initiating him into the intricacies of our Public Health laws and practice. When I took him down to a successful sewage farm he was so much impressed with the machinery employed that he made large purchases from the makers, and I have no doubt that this machinery has been exactly reproduced in Japan. I was struck by the fact that his notes of the information supplied to him were taken, not in Japanese, but in English, and when I inquired the reason he told me that an Oriental language was much too slow, as a letter of the alphabet was generally composed of several strokes, each of which had to be separately painted. He therefore habitually wrote English; and I suppose that his countrymen may hereafter follow his example in this respect. He visited me at my house at Weybridge, and I found him an agreeable and shrewd companion. He was most grateful for the little help which I was able to give him; and his Government presented me with a Japanese tea-service and also with a handsome specimen of inlaid art-work.

CHAPTER XVI.

METROPOLITAN WATER-SUPPLY—PLAGUE OF EELS—PROPOSALS FOR PURCHASE.

Among the multifarious matters included within the jurisdiction of the Local Government Board was the London Water. Their control was very shadowy, for although they had on their staff an engineer whose duty it was to make to them periodical reports on the character of the supplies provided by the eight companies, and though some correspondence now and then took place on particular points, these commercial undertakings were entrenched so strongly behind their Private Acts that they paid little attention to occasional shots from Whitehall. Now and then, however, exceptional circumstances called for the Board's action; and one of the most curious cases was the plague of eels which for several years infested the mains of the East London Company. It is true that month after month the reports of the chemists showed conclusively that the water was absolutely free from living organisms, but this apparently was because they were too large for the microscope. The organisms which the Company distributed to their customers were indeed easily visible to the naked eye, for some were no less than eighteen inches long, and they were so numerous that the Local Board of West Ham made complaint of the danger to the health of the district. Eels are a toothsome dainty,

whether spatch-cocked, stewed, fried, or in the form known to diners at Gravesend as *anguilles à la Toulouse;* and a pound of eel is unquestionably more valuable than a pound of water. But those in East London, instead of fulfilling their destiny by being legitimately caught, skinned, and cooked, had a fashion of committing suicide in stopcocks and taps. There they decomposed, with the result of causing the water to become putrid, and of giving something which was believed to be typhoid fever to various unlucky consumers. The Company's explanation was that several years previously some of their filter-beds had burst and that the unfiltered water on that occasion had made its way into the mains, carrying with it a number of minute eels, which afterwards spawned and multiplied in the pipes. Various attempts had since been made to expel them, but without success. The Company were inclined to pooh-pooh the complaint, and declared that the number of cases of even alleged injury to health in the thousands of houses supplied by them was really trifling. But it appeared that in one limited area, in the course of a few days, no less than seven stoppages of pipes had occurred from this cause, and considering the proverbial slipperiness of eels, and the difficulty of catching them with such a rude appliance as a tap, the fact was significant. Besides, their presence suggested that the mains contained something besides pure water. On what did they feed? Clearly not on weeds or other vegetable substances, for the pipes were made of iron. If, however, they lived on animalculæ, was it certain that what was eels' food might not be man's poison, and why had the analytical chemists and microscopists failed to discover it?

Eventually Mr W. H. Power, already mentioned as one of the scientific staff of the Board, and General

Scott, R.E., the official Water Examiner, were directed to make a local investigation, and were successful in solving a problem which had baffled all the efforts of the Water Company and their experts. Plausible statements were at first forthcoming in support of the theory that the eels had been bred in the mains. It was said that they presented a blanched and attenuated appearance; that they were almost blind; and that successive generations had thus, in accordance with Darwinian principles, evidently adapted themselves to their environment. Still, eels cannot live without food, and what food could they find in water of which the filtration proved on examination to be thoroughly efficient? Then the rushing current passing through a main would surely be a very unfavourable spawning-ground. Yet the accident to the filter had happened some seven years previously, no unfiltered water had since been admitted, and some of the specimens caught were evidently much less than seven years old.

Here, however, the Inspectors' knowledge of natural history was practically applied. It seems that very little used to be known as to the mode of reproduction of eels, or the locality of their breeding-grounds. Every autumn full-grown eels descended rivers in large numbers, and every spring myriads of elvers from two to five inches in length went up in shoals from the estuaries to the upland waters. Both classes, old and young, had a habit of leaving the water from time to time and of crossing dewy meadows and marshy lands, sometimes surmounting apparently impassable barriers. It was not, however, until a comparatively recent period that naturalists definitely ascertained that eels breed only in estuaries, or in the sea itself, and that no instance has ever been chronicled in which young eels have been produced in other than salt, or brackish,

water. It seemed so very improbable, therefore, that this had occurred within a main, that the Inspectors cast about for some other explanation. One fable was soon swept away. So far from the eels being blanched, or ghostly, or blind, the evidence showed that, as a rule, they were good and vigorous specimens of ordinary silver eels, from which they differed neither in appearance nor in taste. Then, the probability that the filter accident had been concerned in the matter was much lessened by the consideration that although the unfiltered water had rushed into two reservoirs, one at Lea-Bridge and the other at Old-Ford, eels were found only in the area supplied from the latter. Suspicion being therefore specially directed to it, some remarkable facts were elicited. The conduit admitting the water was terminated by a wire screen with mere pin-hole apertures of only one twenty-fourth part of an inch in diameter. Through these not even the smallest elver known to naturalists could possibly pass. The reservoir was cleaned out in 1884 and again in 1886, and it is certain that between those two years all the water which flowed into it had been filtered, and had also passed through the screen. Yet when it was emptied on the second occasion, eels were found in it varying in weight from a few ounces to several pounds. This discovery threw a new light on the matter. The larger eels were certainly more than two years old, and therefore must have gained access to the reservoir since it had been emptied, as its paved floor made it impossible that they could have concealed themselves when the water was let out. Others had obviously come into existence long after the filter accident, and unless, in opposition to all previous experience, they had been bred in fresh water, they too must have managed to

effect an entrance elsewhere than through the conduit. How had this happened?

It seems that the reservoir in question is partly encircled by the river Lea; and the Inspectors came to the conclusion that full-grown eels, descending on their autumn migration to the sea, and possibly becoming discontented with the flavour of that much polluted stream, had developed an inclination to wander ashore and had found in the gently shelving bank of the grass-covered reservoir the best opportunity for indulging their whim. The same thing happened in the case of elvers ascending the river in the spring. Passing along the turf which constitutes the roof of the reservoir, and possibly being made aware by instinct that some water less objectionable than that of the Lea was below them, they had come to certain holes habitually left open for the ventilation of the huge underground tank. "Hullo," said the eccentric bridegroom in 'Great Expectations,' "here's a church; let's have a wedding!" "Hullo," said the eels, "here's a pond; let's have a swim!" So down they dropped, and having thus obtained entrance to the reservoir, their migratory instinct, coupled with their disgust at finding nothing to eat, led them to pursue their journey into the mains. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* The Company had only to remember that, it being the custom of eels to travel by land as well as by water, it was necessary to protect the holes in the roof of their reservoir as they had previously protected the conduit. This was done; we have heard no more of the "plague of eels"; and a substantial grievance has been remedied by the utilisation of some little-known facts of natural history.

Of course the information embodied in the Water Examiner's various reports brought into strong relief

the anomalies of the arrangement by which the supply of the prime necessary of life to the greatest city in the world rested with the managers of a large number of commercial undertakings. Water taken from the same source, on the same day, was found to be limpid in one district and turbid in another, because one Company had filtered it efficiently while the other had economised expenditure in that respect. Of two precisely similar houses in the same street, it happened in particular instances that one had to pay fifty per cent more in water rates than the other, in consequence of the variation in the statutory charges of different districts. In times of drought one Company, owing to the insufficient capacity of its reservoirs, had to cut off its supply for all but a few hours of the twenty-four, while its neighbour had a superfluity which was running to waste. It was quite obvious that, with proper organisation, immense economies in storage, in distribution, and in other particulars might be effected under a single management for the whole area.

As long ago as 1879, Professor Fawcett made a telling speech in favour of buying up the Companies and entrusting the work to a public body. He was answered by the President of the Local Government Board, who pointed out difficulties of finance, of administration, and so on, and would concede no more than the vague promise of "careful consideration," which is the political equivalent of postponement to the Greek Kalends. But ministerial policy on the matter had been left an open question, and it was apparently on the inspiration of the moment that Mr (afterwards Viscount) Cross, then Home Secretary, threw over Mr Sclater-Booth and pledged himself to deal with the matter. Of course the Companies' shares became inflated at once, the rise in market value varying from twenty-five to no

less than fifty per cent. The Home Secretary declared on the one hand that he had determined to buy the property of every one of the eight companies, and on the other hand that he did not propose to apply to Parliament for statutory powers of compulsion. This was, in effect, to say that he would give the Companies whatever they asked; and though the terms arranged with some of them were reasonable enough, those with others were ridiculously extravagant, amounting in one or two cases to something like fifty years' purchase of the profits. These bargains were violently assailed by Sir William Harcourt; and what was generally considered to be their recklessness undoubtedly contributed to the defeat of the Conservatives in the General Election of 1880. It was said, with a memory of the Bruce Licensing Bill, that having been floated in on beer, they were floated out on water.

Everybody was agreed that the whole system ought to be placed in the hands of a public body, and that the case was like that of the Sibylline Books, for the longer the postponement, the greater the payment, and the less the profit. Yet the question was fought over for more than twenty years at enormous cost, and the Parliamentary lawyers pocketed many thousands of pounds. While political parties and County Councils and Water Companies were fighting, the ratepayers had to furnish the funds. It was the old story,

"Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi."

Before the commencement of the Cross negotiations the market value of the shares was less than fourteen millions and a half. In twelve years it had risen to nearly twenty-eight millions, having thus almost doubled itself. The extravagance of the terms proposed in 1879 obviously had a considerable effect in inflating the price.

No doubt most of the supply, even in the unreformed days of the Companies, was much better than that of other capitals; and it must have been in the year 1890 or thereabouts that the Municipality of Paris sent over Commissioners to ascertain what improvements they could effect by adopting some of our methods. These gentlemen were handed over to me to give them every possible information, and in the course of our conference I became painfully aware that a tolerable acquaintance with the French of ordinary conversation may be co-existent with painful ignorance of the technical terms of mechanical science. As to such words as "valves," "standpipes," and "stopcocks," although I was doubtful, I made shots which were not disgracefully bad. But when I had to suggest a visit to the Lambeth Waterworks, I thought myself beaten, and could only try what I supposed to be a periphrasis,—"Établissement pour la distribution des Eaux,"—hoping that somebody would give me the right word. Yet nobody corrected me, so when the Commissioners had departed, I rushed off to my French dictionary and looked out "Waterworks." To my intense astonishment I found "Établissement pour la distribution des Eaux." *Sic me servavit Apollo;* and I reflected that only a nation which expresses ninety-eight as "four-twenties-ten-eight" would have time enough to expand "Waterworks" so elaborately.

In the session of 1891 St Stephen's was the scene of a three-cornered duel between the City Corporation, the London County Council, and the Companies; and I wrote a series of seven articles[1] in the *Economist*,

[1] Lord Bramwell wrote to the *Economist* to the effect that one of these articles had misrepresented a Judgment which he had delivered in the Court of Appeal as to the charges of a London Water Company. But having verified my references before writing, I was able to show that for

putting forward a scheme of purchase which would, I contended, be liberal to the shareholders and would produce considerable economies for the ratepayers. The price, as the result of the rather elaborate calculations which I published, would by this scheme have been about thirty millions. But more Committees and Commissions were appointed; and Water Bills continued to be a milch cow for the Parliamentary bar and for the experts [1] during nearly a dozen years more. Eventually Mr Walter Long, as President of the Local Government Board, resolutely grappled with the question, and under his Act of 1902 placed the undertakings in the hands of a Water Board at a cost which was settled by the Court of Arbitration as no less than forty-seven millions and a half. Procrastination had proved to be the thief of money as well as of time.

once his memory had played him false, and that my statement had been quite accurate.

[1] The fashion in which some of these witnesses managed to mould their reports of analyses so as to suit their case was not calculated to give one an exalted opinion of their standard of scientific truth. When one of the busiest of them died, the question was asked, "What will people do who want to sell their dirty water?" And when another analyst departed, whose special mission in life had been to convince Parliamentary Committees of the purity of the gas manufactured by the companies which employed him, Huxley observed, "It will be unfortunate if he has gone to a place where there is brimstone in every gas!" The readiness of these experts was wonderful, and was generally successful. But the late Chief Justice Coleridge used to tell a story which showed that their daring might prove dangerous. He was cross-examining a witness engaged in the promotion of a Harbour Bill, and asked him whether there was not a reef of rock which would interfere with the entrance. "Yes," answered the expert, "but we propose to blast away the only important portion." "Is there not a sandbank which would also be an awkward obstruction?" "We shall deal with it in this fashion" (explanation given). "But," pursued Coleridge, "is there not a special set of the tide which would be inconvenient?" "Yes, but we have decided to divert it by a groyne." "You have visited the place?" "Certainly." "Well, I have not; and I invented the reef, the sandbank, and the current, so I am glad you are provided for all sorts of possibilities." For once the expert was nonplussed.

CHAPTER XVII.

ADULTERATION—EVIDENCE BEFORE SELECT COMMITTEE—VACCINATION — 'ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA' — DR RUSSEL WALLACE.

A FABLE of German origin has described the adventures of four flies in search of breakfast. The first fixed his affection on some attractive jam, but the jam had been adulterated with copper, so this fly died of inflammation. The second, thus warned against luxuries, resolved to content himself with bread, but the bread was adulterated with alum, so this fly died from internal convulsions. The third, in the hope of drowning his grief for the loss of his companions, betook himself to the edge of the beer-jug, but the beer was adulterated with cocculus indicus, so this fly was drugged to death. The fourth fly, seeing the fate of his comrades, came to the conclusion that life was not worth living, and proceeded to commit suicide on a paper labelled "Fly-poison." But the more he ate the better he throve, for the preparation, like everything else, was extensively adulterated; and succeeding generations of flies have adopted it as their only safe food.

Until comparatively recent times we were almost as badly off as the flies. It was not for want of legislation that we suffered, for as early as the time of Henry III.

bakers, brewers, and vintners were subjected to tremendous penalties for their misdeeds, and successive Acts against adulteration were passed throughout the ages. A statute of George III. even recited that "great quantities of sloe-leaves and leaves of ash, elder and other trees and shrubs are manufactured and sold in imitation of tea," and that "such evil practices are increased to a very great degree to the injury and destruction of great quantities of timber, woods and underwoods, the prejudice of the health of his Majesty's subjects, the diminution of the revenue, the ruin of the fair trader and to the encouragement of idleness." It may be assumed that this picture of the forests of England being destroyed in order to make fictitious tea is somewhat overcharged; but still the practice must have been very general to warrant the insertion of such a statement in the preamble of an Act of Parliament.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the conductors of the *Lancet* had the happy notion of instituting an extensive inquiry as to the character of the food and drugs sold in London, and the result of the analyses was to show that adulteration was widely prevalent and was in many instances of a character injurious to health. On this a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the subject, and fresh Acts were passed in 1860 and 1872. It was found that although these Acts produced some improvement they also inflicted injustice on respectable tradesmen, partly owing to the want of a clear understanding as to what constituted adulteration, and partly owing to the conflicting decisions and inexperience of the analysts. So the "Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," made considerable alterations in the law, established a sort of Chemical Court of Appeal at

Somerset House, and gave the Local Government Board various powers with regard to the appointment of analysts and to other matters.

The administration of the Act was entrusted to my branch of the Office, and it was curious to see the effect of the new legislation in reducing the amount of one of the most common of frauds. Various difficulties were encountered at the outset. Chief among these was one caused by an unlucky phrase in the Act, by which, in order to prevent a tradesman being punished for the accidental substitution of a superior for an inferior article, it was provided that in order to secure conviction for adulteration it must be shown that the sale was "to the prejudice of the purchaser." But under the machinery established by the Act, the samples for analysis were for the most part bought by officers of the Local Authorities; and the ingenuity of a Scottish Law Court discovered that as these officers were not spending their own money, and consequently did not care whether the samples were adulterated or not, they could not possibly be "prejudiced." This decision was adopted largely in English Courts, with the result that many prosecutions failed. A difficulty also arose with regard to the sale of spirits. All spirits come from the still at a strength making it impossible to drink them without dilution; and how was an analyst to know what proportion of dilution was permissible?

So an amending Act was framed, and I was deputed to represent the Local Government Board before the Select Committee of the House of Commons to which it was referred. It was my first experience of being examined by a body of gentlemen casually brought together without any special knowledge of the subject in hand, and I could not help being struck with the

very small amount of trouble which most of them seemed to have taken to make themselves acquainted with it. When I had explained to the best of my ability that, as water was an indispensable constituent of potable gin, it was impossible to say what amount of dilution constituted adulteration until a statutory standard had been fixed, I was nevertheless bombarded with questions as to how many of the samples had been adulterated. However, the amending Act was eventually passed, substantially in the form in which it had been put forward by the Department, and thenceforward the suppression of adulteration progressed steadily.

Milk was the most difficult article to deal with, partly because it was so easy to supplement the product of the cow with the product of the pump, and partly because its natural composition varied so enormously that an ill-bred, ill-fed, and ill-conditioned cow might yield milk which, though perfectly genuine, would be condemned as watered under any ordinary standard. Analysts were unable to discriminate between water which is a natural constituent of all milk, and water which had been fraudulently added, so they were nonplussed. After careful calculation I made an estimate, published in the Board's Annual Report, that not far short of a million gallons of water were annually sold in London alone under the name of milk, and that the consumers were consequently mulcted of between seventy and eighty thousand pounds sterling. A versifier of the day wrote—

"Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the milkman wealthy,
Make the grocer grand."

And certainly the "drops of water" had swollen to floods, though the "grains of sand" were disused by the grocer when sugar was no longer worth adulterating and detection had become easy.

The effect of the vigorous steps taken by the Board to induce Local Authorities to enforce the Act were successful in a marked degree. The proportion of samples reported against has fallen steadily, and is now only about half what it was in those days, although milk is still much watered, and the recent adoption of a statutory standard is not shown by the returns to have had a beneficial effect. We can also congratulate ourselves, as regards the adulterants used, that we now run no risk of being poisoned, even if we are still cheated.

Another subject which gave much employment to my Department was the work connected with the enforcement of vaccination. Whenever an epidemic of small-pox occurred there was a rush for vaccination; at other times there was much difficulty in overcoming the opposition of persons to whom statistics were a maze and science a myth, and who not unnaturally objected to what they regarded as an introduction of disease into a healthy body. I do not propose here to discuss the merits of vaccination; I need only say that its advantages have always seemed to me to be overwhelming and its drawbacks insignificant. But a very active society, having for its object the repeal of compulsion, occupied itself in disseminating the most astounding fictions on the subject, and it was necessary that these should in some way be combated. A Member of Parliament had actually been induced to put a formal question in the House of Commons inquiring "whether the attention of the Government had been called to the

fact that 436 children in the Durham Union were reported as having died from the effects of vaccination in eighteen months; and what steps the Government intended to take to reduce this excessive mortality." Of course the statement was quite unfounded. It had been reported, not that the children in question had died from vaccination but that they had died unvaccinated, which is quite a different matter. Similarly, a widely circulated pamphlet stated that "at the camp at Shorncliffe when small-pox broke out thirteen of the re-vaccinated soldiers died after the operation, others had their arms amputated to save their lives"; the truth being that no deaths in the British Army from vaccination had ever occurred at Shorncliffe, or anywhere else. Scores of other equally baseless assertions were made and were circulated among people whom ordinary official literature was unlikely to reach.

The President of the Anti-Vaccination League issued a sort of manifesto on the subject, which was published in the pages of a penny serial called *Social Notes*. This was edited by Mr S. C. Hall, and as he was desirous that both sides should be heard he applied to the Board to suggest somebody who would put the case for vaccination in a popular form. I was asked to undertake the work; and with the assistance of some of the Board's Medical Staff, the Anti-Vaccination manifesto was pretty completely pulverised by the simple process of showing the League's assumed facts to be fictions. At any rate Mr S. C. Hall wrote to me saying that his faith in vaccination had previously been somewhat shaken, but that I had made him a thorough believer.

A few years later the same sort of thing happened

again. The new edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' contained an article on Vaccination, apparently designed to show that its dangers had been much underrated and its advantages exaggerated; that small-pox was mainly influenced by sanitary conditions and would disappear of itself if Vaccination were abandoned. This of course was not the view of the Profession generally, for the Royal Society, the Royal College of Physicians, and the Royal College of Surgeons had recently sent deputations to the Local Government Board in favour of the Compulsory Acts. But when the 'Encyclopædia,' which was regarded as representing the mature conclusions of scientific opinion, lent its weight to the attack, the Anti-Vaccinationists were naturally jubilant; and it was certain that there would be increased difficulty in securing the enforcement of the Acts. It was considered desirable, therefore, that a critical answer should appear, and I stated the case for Vaccination in an article which was published in the *National Review* of June 1889.

I was helped by the discovery that the contributor to the 'Encyclopædia' had made various mistakes in matters of fact; had confused the gross number of deaths with death-rates, and chicken-pox with small-pox, had misstated the scale of payment for public vaccination, and so on. It was also not difficult to show that a good many of his inferences were unsound, and I took the opportunity of summarising evidence which the Department had accumulated in support of the conclusion of the Select Committee that vaccination is an efficient protection against "one of the most terrible and distinctive of diseases"; that if properly performed it is quite harmless, and that "it is the duty of the State to secure the careful vaccination of the whole

population." I suppose that my article was a success, for the *British Medical Journal* afterwards recommended it to students as the best compendium of information on the question.

It is curious that some unlucky fate seemed to pursue the statistics adopted by the assailants of vaccination, and this was conspicuously the case with regard to the figures put before the Royal Commission which, under the chairmanship of Lord Herschell, devoted an enormous time to an inquiry on the subject. It happened that the one man of exceptional eminence found willing to figure as an anti-vaccinationist was the distinguished Darwinist, Dr Alfred Russel Wallace, who took occasion in the early part of his evidence to give the Commissioners a delightful little lecture on the importance of accuracy in dealing with scientific questions, illustrating it happily with an account of the special precautions taken by Darwin and Tyndall in order to ensure entire freedom from error in their experiments. With this preliminary flourish, he submitted to the Commission statistics which he described as proving vaccination to be worse than worthless by the fact that the best vaccinated Departments in France had, during a long period, the greatest amount of small-pox, and *vice versâ*. Unfortunately these statistics, which were very elaborate, were found on examination at the Local Government Board to be full of the grossest blunders, some being so obvious that it is astonishing that the most cursory glance had not shown their absurdity. Dr Wallace at first made a vigorous fight in defence of his figures, declared that he had himself "worked out the whole of them," and even expressed his belief that they "fully went to show that vaccination causes small-pox." Yet as entry after entry was shown to be

preposterously erroneous, he finally had to admit that they were "wholly valueless," and asked to be allowed to withdraw them. But the Commission ruthlessly printed them, and the result is that the Blue-book contains some fifteen pages of statistical tables, each page being headed with a note that "This table and the diagram drawn from it were handed in by me and subsequently withdrawn; the official tables on which they were based having been shown by the Commission to be untrustworthy. A. R. W." This collapse, after the prefatory discourse on the supreme importance of accuracy, had its humorous side, and it is certainly remarkable to find a Blue-book which publishes a long series of statistics for the express purpose of showing their worthlessness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HUNGARY—TRANSYLVANIA—THE GREEK CHURCH—GOVERNMENT FARMS—GIPSIES—JEWS.

It was in the year 1885 that the Hungarians made a determined effort to prove to Western Europe that they were in the forefront of civilisation. They brought together at Budapest a National Exhibition on a considerable scale, with the design of showing the world at large that theirs was a kingdom with abundant resources which had made wonderful strides in Arts, Commerce, and Agriculture. They enlisted the sympathies of Ferdinand de Lesseps, and invited him to bring in his train a band of Parisian journalists. Various men of distinction were persuaded to come, including such well-known *littérateurs* as François Coppée, Delibes, and Ulbach; and measures were taken to enable them to see as much as possible, not only of the Exhibition but of the country generally. One or two London newspapers were also asked to send special correspondents, and I devoted my autumn holiday to a mission in that capacity on behalf of the *Morning Post*.

I found the Hungarian capital delightful, and thoroughly agreed with the prose poet who had celebrated its charms in the local guide-book. There I

learned that "Budapest within the latest two decennaries soared stupendously," that while its trade showed "an activity somewhat febrile," both its churches and its "laic buildings" are "magnific." Indeed the Parliament House "offers a work of architectonic art so as to excitate everybody's imagination," while "*vis-à-vis* we see the Palace of Justice with its staircage evocating a dazzling effect." I was introduced to the Schwurplatz (considerately translated as the "Swear-place," a word which suggests a golf-bunker), as well as to the Town Grove, which "with its giant trees, parked places and extent leas, shady avenues, and rendez-vous of public ressort offers a pleasing reflection both to adults and children." Much more "magnific" writing of the same kind fell short of doing justice to the picturesque town where East and West meet; where the splendid palaces of Buda face such relics of antiquity as the Turkish forts of Pest; and where the sheepskin coat of the Wallack contrasts with the latest Parisian confection of the fashionable beauty.

It happened that I arrived a week or so before my French colleagues, and the welcome extended to me was extraordinarily cordial. I could not help being surprised at the intimacy which the Hungarians displayed with English affairs. For example, it chanced that the conversation at dinner turned on the respective antiquity of the nobility of England and of Hungary. A Hungarian gentleman forthwith told us who were the premier Earl and the premier Baron of the United Kingdom, and discussed our peerage as intimately as if he had graduated in the Heralds' College, and it must be remembered that the Hungarian nobility is very different from that of Poland, as to

which the Russian Government promulgated a law to the effect that no person should hold the title of Prince unless his domains, territories, rivers, mountains, and principalities were of the full value of £40 per annum. Another Hungarian, in comparing the Home Rule question then agitating Croatia with our "Irish Difficulty," spoke of the Gaelic origin of the Protestants of Ulster as a fact with which all his hearers were well acquainted, and appeared to understand the causes of the curious alliance between priests and Nationalists much better than most Englishmen. Everybody's helpfulness was unbounded. I had only to mention that I was anxious to see something of the agricultural districts as well as of the scenery of the Carpathians, and a route was made out for me, telegrams were sent to some of the principal officials and landed proprietors at the places which I was to visit, arrangements were made for my stay at the country-house of the governor of one of the counties, and everywhere my wife and I met with the utmost kindness.

My first excursion was to the Alföld or Great Plain of Transylvania, which, after Lower Egypt and Manitoba, is perhaps the most fertile province in the world. The rich alluvial soil requires little tillage, and scarcely any manure. In the American phrase, "If you tickle it with a hoe it laughs with a harvest." It is perfectly flat, and on each side the mountains rise from it like a wall. One of our early experiences here was a storm of a very impressive character. We had started in the morning in bright sunlight, and drove in broiling heat along the road between two mountain-ranges. Suddenly there appeared over the hills a huge column of cloud which began to assume the shape of a balloon.

In five minutes the entire sky was overcast, and the waterspout swept across the valley. Just before it reached us a brilliant flash of lightning seemed to illumine the whole heaven, and was instantaneously followed by a peal of thunder like a roar of artillery. Then the rain came down in a fashion of which I had no previous experience. I suppose that as a matter of fact there were drops separate from each other, but the sensation of the unlucky people under it was that of having water poured over them. The horses refused to face the storm, and as no shelter was obtainable we could only turn with the hood of our carriage to windward, and wait till it was over. For a quarter of an hour or so we sat under a downfall that penetrated everything, when the sky suddenly cleared, the rain ceased, the mountains, wrapped in blue mist, stood up placidly on each side of us, and only a broad line of beaten-down maize and tobacco showed the track of the waterspout.

In Hungary the language question is fought over by the native and is particularly perplexing to foreigners. "You spell a city Edinburgh and you call it Constantinople," was the piteous complaint of the Frenchman in England, who after noting Greenwich as pronounced "Grinidg," Southwark as "Sousouorc," and Chatham as "Je t'aime," was reduced to despair at being presented with "Chumly" as the equivalent of Cholmondely. The traveller in Hungary is in still worse case. Not only have the towns always two and often three names, but these names do not bear to each other even the resemblance that a historic character detected between Macedon and Monmouth. The province of Transylvania is called in Magyar Erdely, in German Siebenbürgen, in Roumanian Ardealu. Its

principal city figures in guide-books as Klausenburg, but by nine-tenths of the inhabitants is known only as Kolosvar, and this sort of thing becomes puzzling.

This same Klausenburg boasts of being the Athens of Hungary, and has a famous University, with stately buildings and a large staff of professors. It contains something like three thousand students, who are boarded, fed, and taught for a few shillings a-week, so that here, as at some of the Scottish Universities, the son of a poor man is able to have the advantage of a first-rate education. I was introduced to Professor Brassai, whose reputation as an Oriental scholar was world-wide, and his linguistic acquirements were certainly extraordinary. To say nothing of European tongues, he could not only speak and write five or six languages of Asia, but actually was familiar with their different dialects. I found him reading Sir Walter Scott's 'Chronicles of the Canongate,' and he addressed me in excellent English, although excusing himself for some hesitation on the ground that at his age (eighty-five) the particular word was sometimes hard to find. It would be difficult to meet with a finer specimen of learned old age. Tall, erect, active in his movements, with a Carlylese head, and piercing eyes which required no help from glasses, this octogenarian scholar was astonishing in his faculties, both of mind and body.

Not long before, I had read in the *Daily Telegraph* a letter from its Paris correspondent describing himself as having strolled about the Gardens of Versailles while two duchesses picked strawberries for him; and really our treatment at Klausenburg was such as to incline me to swagger in the same fashion. The Governor and a University Professor attended our arrival at the station, at ten o'clock at night, drove

us to our hotel in an imposing carriage, and devoted the following day to entertaining us. The chief function was a luncheon at which they provided us with various dishes, described as typically Hungarian. Chief among these was a certain *Paprika gulyas*, a terrible compound of ancient poultry and red pepper, as to which we did our best to utter appropriate compliments. Only an hour or so after the conclusion of the meal, the Professor proudly brought to us an evening paper in which our banal remarks were reported, with the expression of a hope that I should give a good account of the Hungarians—'Salisburynak,' *i.e.*, to the newspaper which was supposed to expound the policy of the then Premier.

I once heard a preacher contrast the large amount of attention which we pay to externals with the small modicum of care which we bestow on our spiritual part. "We bedizen our bodies with finery," he observed, and proceeded to add, "we wash them every day," when his eye fell on a member of the congregation who he was certain did nothing of the kind. So being a man of strict accuracy, he interjected by way of parenthesis, "or at any rate once a-week," whereupon a titter went through the church. Whatever may be the attention which the Transylvanians bestow on their souls, they certainly wash their bodies to a marvellous extent. The poorest people, especially in the Roumanian villages, all look clean, and you cannot pass a stream without seeing villagers, male and female, performing their ablutions, and often even washing their pigs. Most classes appear to divide their days between drinking mineral water and bathing. One of the principal watering-places is Elöpatak, which is full of mineral springs, warranted to cure every ill to

which flesh is heir, from toothache to typhus, and from gout to goitre. It attracts Roumanians, Wallacks, Bulgarians, and Orientals of various types, who, with their flowing robes of brilliant colour, make the public gardens look as if the frequenters had come from a fancy ball. The fact that we were only a few hours from the Black Sea, and that this was nearly the most eastern of European baths, accounted for the wonderful gathering of nationalities and picturesque variety of costumes.

It was curious to learn the progress made by the Greek Church in this neighbourhood. Whole villages which had been originally colonised by Saxon Lutherans had been attracted by the more ornate ceremonial, and each pope or parish priest was said to exercise an extraordinary influence over the ignorant peasants. Healing by faith, though explicitly proscribed by law, was commonly practised. And if a man had an internal pain he did not take a blue pill, but called on the pope to exorcise the evil spirit within him. Even if the birds destroyed the crops, resort was had, not to a scarecrow, but to the pope, who went to the field, pronounced what my informant called "Was für ein Hocus-pocus," and even occasionally provided a clapper duly blessed, which not even the most irreligious jackdaw would dare to disregard. By encouraging superstition of this kind he not only pocketed a fee in connection with almost every local event, however trivial, but obtained a firm hold on the men, by whom his powers were regarded as supernatural. The forty thousand saints of the Roumanian's calendar make his religion a sort of polytheism, of which the village pope is the representative. Still some popes had consciences, and I heard of one who

declined to comply with an application for his blessing in respect of an utterly neglected field of sandy soil. "No," he said, "that land is too bad for anything but manure."

The Hungarian Government were very early in the establishment of Model Farms, and I had an opportunity of visiting one at Fogaras, where by draining and skilled irrigation unproductive and unhealthy marsh land had been converted into rich pasture and arable soil yielding heavy crops. For tillage, oxen were employed almost exclusively, and in the opinion of the director they could plough more than the same number of horses. But then they are of a special breed, very large and powerful, whereas I did not see in Hungary anything like our English cart-horses. The cows are good milkers, with deep backs, broad shoulders, and immense horns. But as one quart of buffalo-milk produces as much butter as nearly three quarts of cows' milk, the buffaloes, though they give much less in quantity, were said to be the mainstay of the dairy. Throughout the valley we saw large numbers of these beasts, many of them lying in big pools by the river-side, with only their comic snouts above water. They are prodigiously strong, but queer-tempered and self-willed, and have a tendency to rush into any pond they happen to see, even when they are drawing a cart, so they do not make good beasts of burden.

Nor, as I can say from personal experience, have they the least regard for art. On one occasion I selected, as I thought, a mild specimen, and proceeded to photograph him. But although he had been lashed by Wallacks and kicked by Roumanians from his earliest infancy, he evidently considered that to be made the subject of amateur photography, and that by a Briton, was an

unbearable indignity. On being focussed (for this was before the days of hand-cameras) he became uneasy; as the operations progressed he gave a snort, and when he advanced, lashing his tail and pawing the ground, I was just considering how best to save myself and my apparatus, when a swarthy Wallack rushed up, drove off the beast with a tremendous cow-hide whip, and proceeded to explain by signs that the animals were dangerous to strangers. However, I took the photograph, and rewarded my preserver with nearly sixpence, a piece of liberality which so overwhelmed him with gratitude that he insisted on showing me the best path over the hill and invoked manifold blessings on my goodness. In fact, I had to beg him to keep my beneficence secret, as any inoffensive stranger who gives a trifle to a beggar runs a risk of being canonised among the forty thousand. It is thus rather a distinction not to be a saint, just as in England the lady who has not written a novel is pointed out as an exceptional person.

We also paid a visit to one of the half-dozen stud farms belonging to the Hungarian Government. The name of one of them at least is well known in England, for a Derby winner was bred at Kisber, and christened after his birthplace. There, however, only Arabs are kept, while another establishment devotes itself to the production of foals from half-bred English sires, and turns out carriage-horses and troopers of a good size. At Fogaras the stallions which I saw were Spaniards—small, wiry, active, with short legs, strongly-built shoulders, powerful hind-quarters, and deep backs, but having heads rather too large to suit English taste. With three of these a Hungarian gentleman drove me about ninety miles in two successive days, and the

team did the last dozen miles with as little appearance of fatigue as if they were just beginning work instead of having dragged a heavy carriage with four persons and luggage for a couple of days through rivers, over rocks, up precipitous mountain-roads, and along the roughest tracks that ever tried the springs of anything on wheels.

Our friend was the son of the Governor of the province, and at his father's castle we were most hospitably entertained, and had a pleasant opportunity of making acquaintance with Hungarian society. Our hosts were people of thorough culture and refinement, but it was curious to notice the differences between their customs and habits and those of country gentlemen of corresponding rank in England. At meals, for example, it was necessary to watch one's neighbour in order to avoid what might appear bad manners. At the end of dinner each man rose and made a low bow to his lady, whom he then conducted on his arm to the drawing-room. Their dishes and drinks were now and then peculiar, but fortunately we were not called upon to follow the example of one old lady of very exalted rank indeed, who always took a glass of rum with her breakfast. Our host was a keen politician, and much resented the insult to the Emperor Francis Joseph for which Gladstone had just had to apologise to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador. He expressed his unbounded amazement that any statesman should be befooled by Russian diplomacy, and should not recognise the fact that Russia was steadily advancing towards India with obviously sinister designs. Hungarian opinion, I was assured, was aghast at the fact that our Foreign Office seemed to be yielding point after point, and to be content that, as this Hungarian

nobleman put it, the British lion should be kept on the backward march with his tail between his legs. Of course Russia is the traditional enemy of Austria-Hungary, and he naturally felt aggrieved that Great Britain was taking what he considered to be the wrong side.

When we had finished this pleasant visit, and had to make acquaintance with Hungarian inns outside the capital, we found that they left a good deal to be desired. Even in considerable towns and at popular bath establishments, in the midst of the magnificent scenery of the Southern Carpathians, the sanitary arrangements were simply barbarous and abominable. Then, although it cannot be said that the rooms are unclean, the "chamois of the night" was more universal than anywhere else, except perhaps in Spain. A distinguished and perhaps truthful Indian official once told me a story, in illustration of the extraordinary vitality and voracity of a certain Himalayan beetle. He had caught a specimen, and had killed it, in the usual fashion of entomologists, with cyanide of potassium; he had removed its interior, substituting cotton-wool and camphor, and had pinned it down in a cabinet containing a large quantity of butterflies and moths. In the morning, however, on going to look at his prize he found that it had not only freed itself from pin and cork, but had eaten up all the other specimens in the collection. I can almost imagine a Hungarian flea capable of the same feat. The more you kill, the more come to the funeral, and their activity, their energy, and their appetites are prodigious. You cannot get rid of them; in Tom Moore's words—

> "You may crush, you may smother the flea as you will,
> But his brothers and sisters will come at you still."

The Hungarians have had many heroes in their history. Matthias Corvinus rescued them from the Turks. Deàk freed them from the fetters of feudalism. Will no liberator arise to save them from the fleas? Perhaps, however, this victory has been accomplished, for I am tempted to forget that I am writing of more than twenty years ago, and since that time not only has much water passed under the bridges, but the sanitary and civilising schoolmaster has been abroad.

I wonder whether the gipsies now abound as they did. Their encampments and mud-huts were to be seen outside almost every village, and they occupied a recognised position as regards certain kinds of work. They did whatever the rest of the population considered degrading, unpleasant, or troublesome. They cleaned stables, mended pots and pans, made bricks, doctored horses and cattle, and caught hares and fish for the innkeepers. They were generally regarded as pariahs. I found a typical gipsy, whom I wished to photograph, by way of contrast, in company with a handsome young Roumanian, the ostler at a Transylvanian inn, but the ostler declined. He was quite willing to be photographed alone, in his sheepskin coat and his embroidered waistcoat, but he would be disgraced in the opinion of his neighbours if he appeared in a picture side by side with a gipsy. It was with great difficulty that the governor of the town, who kindly came to my aid, prevailed on him to submit to the unwelcome juxtaposition, on the express condition that no copies of the photograph should be sent to Hungary. In another case, when I proposed to photograph a good-looking Roumanian woman, who at first consented, she fairly bolted when the camera

was directed at her, and my offer of payment quite failed to persuade her to be taken. I imagined that, as she belonged to a superstitious race, she considered the lens to be a sort of "evil eye"; but it turned out on inquiry that she supposed that people's likenesses were wanted in order that they might be made to pay a poll-tax, and nothing could disabuse her of this wonderful notion.

There is one capacity in which the gipsies are held in high regard and in which they earn large sums. They are the musicians of the nation, and everywhere one meets with gipsy bands, whose wild music has something magical about it. Their hereditary talent in this way is astonishing. Whistle or sing to the leader a tune which he has never heard before, and he will immediately catch the air and reproduce it with perfect accuracy on his violin. Let him play it to his companions and they will forthwith improvise excellent harmonies for it, and although probably not one among them knows anything of the rules of thorough-bass, the rendering will be delightful. The favourite airs are melancholy, and a popular proverb says that a Hungarian must have sad music to make him merry. Like most national melodies, it abounds with repetitions. Just as in "The Bluebells of Scotland" the same phrase recurs over and over again, so in the gipsy music of Hungary you hear first the air, then the air a third lower, then the air again, and then more variations. But it has a decided individuality. I saw the Czardas danced in a barn by Roumanians, who were evidently stirred to their depths; and as the music grew faster and faster, and their wild gyrations became more energetic, it was clear that here was

something different, not only in degree but in kind, from anything that I had previously come across, either in Tyrol or in Italy, the two great lands of dance and song.

The Jews are another class by themselves, and have managed to absorb a considerable proportion of the trade of the country, of which they are, as elsewhere, the bankers and the money-lenders. They are unpopular, and come in for a good deal of abuse; but in a war of words they generally get the best of it. "Vous voulez nous avaler tous," said an anti-Semite. "Monsieur, ma réligion me le défend," was a Jew's rejoinder, subtly suggesting that his oppressors were pigs. So, too, at a public luncheon, a Roman Catholic Prelate who was carving asked a Rabbi, "When may I give your reverence a slice of this magnificent ham?" "On the occasion when I shall have the honour of being present at the wedding of your Eminence," was the answer. But at a railway station a man whose features, though obscured by dirt, unmistakably betrayed his race, was forcing his way through the crowd, with rude disregard of shins and elbows, when he pushed aside a couple of pretty American girls who blocked his passage. "Guess that is one of the Children of Israel that has not picked up much *manner* in the wilderness," said one of them to her sister. Quick as lightning came the rejoinder, "Looks as if he had passed through the water without its touching him on either side." That Jew (perhaps because he did not understand the American tongue) had nothing to say.

It was in Roumania that a Bill was passed by the Legislature, only a year or two before my visit, imposing on the Jews civil disabilities, in order to prevent their

suing for the repayment of their loans; and this preposterously unjust measure, though naturally popular with their creditors, was only prevented by the King's veto from becoming law. In Hungary their political influence has been for many years steadily increasing, but they are tolerated as a disagreeable necessity, and certainly do not blend with the rest of the nation.

CHAPTER XIX.

HUNGARY—DE LESSEPS AND PARISIAN JOURNALISTS—CARPATHIAN WATERING-PLACE—DUEL—ICE-CAVERN.

It was delightful to see the tact with which the French journalists ingratiated themselves with the Hungarians. In the course of a great function held in their honour at the Budapest Museum, their leader, Ferdinand de Lesseps, actually showed himself, despite his years, as active as a young man, rushing through the wild curvetings and prancings of the national dance for at least five minutes, and finally saluting on the cheek the charming actress who was his partner. Again, I happened to be chatting with Delibes, the dramatist, at a buffet, when one of our hosts came up and insisted on our giving an opinion on the merits of some Hungarian champagne, which he poured out for us. I sipped it, and came to the conclusion that anything more unlike Pommery or Cliquot had never been manufactured, so I was glad that it fell to Delibes to be the first to deliver his judgment. "My dear friend," he said, "I have never tasted any wine like that in France itself," —a truism which delighted our entertainer, and in which I was able to express my entire agreement. Then, the Frenchmen had crammed their history cleverly. For example, not one of them, in all prob-

ability, had ever previously heard of the existence of the poet Petöfi, but with Parisian quickness of apprehension they discovered that the name was dear to every patriot, and accordingly they purchased an enormous wreath which, with much pomp and several effusive orations, they deposited at the feet of the poet's statue, thereby arousing tremendous enthusiasm among all classes. The crowds attending their progress constantly increased, and indeed on one occasion the concourse made it so difficult for them to land on the Hungarian shore of the Danube that, as one paper rather smartly observed, they might have been Hungarian goods attempting to enter France — a process which, be it understood, the exceedingly high duties made almost impossible. They were bedizened with orders as if to contrast Republican love of decoration with the Monarchical simplicity of their entertainers, who are not much given to such ornaments. No doubt they found that what has been called the "business of pleasure" is rather serious work. They had on an average about two banquets daily; they were whirled all over the country, by turns enveloped in dust and drenched in mountain mist; they had to listen to long Magyar speeches of which they understood not a word, and to national music which set their teeth on edge. They were dragged from model farm to factory, up Carpathian peaks and down coal-mines; they had to declare that various compounds of red pepper were superior to the best Parisian *plats*, that cheese with a pronounced flavour of turpentine was much better than Roquefort, and that the wines—well, I fancy that for the most part they imitated Delibes in giving ambiguous answers to questions on this head.

But the Hungarian Administration was actively

engaged in improving the products of the vineyards, and I believe that the result has been successful. In Budapest, a Central Cellar, with a skilled staff of chemists, professors, and so on, had been established as an Official Wine Department. To it every grower had the right to send his wines for sale, and their quality was tested and guaranteed In this cellar I was present at a so-called *déjeuner-dinatoire;* and some 220 guests had an excellent luncheon among the vats. Several of the Frenchmen's speeches were smart and epigrammatic, but there was one man, then scarcely known in England, who carried off the honours of oratory. This was Maurus Jokai, the chief Hungarian novelist, and also the best speaker in Parliament. With a voice as musical as Gladstone's, an attitude as effective as that of the famous Earl of Derby, a commanding presence, piercing eyes, and what gave one the impression of much subdued force underneath his words, Jokai spoke with singular eloquence. When he alluded to de Lesseps as the man who had joined two seas, and was now come to join two lands, the applause nearly shook the wine-barrels off their stands. Altogether, the luncheon was a great success, and "Père Lesseps" delivered himself of an amusing jingle in reference to the number of guests—"nous sommes ici," he said, "à peu près deux cent vingt mais heureusement non sans vin, et on ne vint pas en vain."

Among the show places to which the journalists were carried off was Tatra, in the Northern Carpathians. This is the Engadin of Hungary, and Schmecks, its St Moritz, lies at the respectable height of over three thousand feet above the sea. The scenery is particularly fine, and the mountain breezes are tempered and softened by forests of firs. Here the Viennese

come in large numbers to soak themselves, internally, externally, and apparently eternally, in sulphurous waters, and to make what they are pleased to call "mountain ascents." They arm themselves with enormous alpenstocks, carved and tattooed like Indian clubs, and engage guides who march about with coils of rope strong enough to moor an ironclad, and with axes fitted to cut steps up the ice slopes of the Jungfrau. These weapons, it is true, are not brought into use except for chopping sticks to boil the afternoon tea-kettle, for the simple reason that in the Carpathians there are no glaciers. Still, they encourage the notion that here too there is mountaineering to be done, and show that facilities are provided for tremendous expeditions on ice which evidently ought to exist. Game abounds, the rivers are full of trout, and I wondered that Englishmen, who pay enormous sums for sport in various parts of the world, did not seem to have discovered this particular hunting-ground. The French journalists were enthusiastic in their appreciation of its charms, and may have advertised them so widely that possibly Tatra is no longer unknown outside the Dual Empire. Then, however, it was a *terra incognita*, and we were all delighted with it.

Unluckily one "regrettable incident" marked their visit. Foremost amongst their entertainers were the Pulszky family, who have long taken a prominent part in the literature of Hungary. But they had also been active in politics, and it happened that in this field they had offended some of the reactionary nobles. Among these was a certain Count Zichy, who had gained a reputation as the finest pistol-shot in Hungary, although as a young man he had lost his right arm from a gun accident. His skill was such that more

than once, at a distance of twenty paces, he had shot away a coin held by one of his friends between thumb and forefinger—a feat which, by the way, did almost as much credit to the courage of the friend as to the skill of the firer. Obviously, however, the Count was a formidable opponent in a duel, especially as he was also a first-rate swordsman. A quarrel with him was therefore a serious matter in a country where duels were of everyday occurrence, and perhaps this fact tended to make him rather an "arbitrary gent."

When, therefore, Mr Charles Pulszky organised the expedition to Tatra, Count Zichy treated the arrangements very cavalierly and announced that, after the banquet to which the Frenchmen were invited, he would entertain them at a concert, to consist for the most part of his own performance at the piano. But they somehow understood that this terrible Count was not in the authorised programme, and they were perhaps also appalled at the thought of having to spend an evening in listening to such a rendering of the compositions of Liszt and Wagner as could be given by a one-handed amateur. So, when the Count seated himself at the piano they rose in a body and left the room with loud cheers for Pulszky. Next morning Count Zichy's seconds waited on Pulszky, and a duel was arranged to take place on the return to Budapest. There was no secrecy about the matter. It was announced in the newspapers that the two gentlemen would fight at the National Riding School on such and such a day; and as we had seen a good deal of Mr Pulszky, who was the most courteous and agreeable of men, we were naturally anxious as to the result. Having the choice of weapons he had selected swords, and although he found some awkward-

ness in opposing a man who fought with his left hand he had rather the best of the encounter. Both combatants were wounded, and after a fight in which there were no less than nine bouts, Count Zichy was disabled by a deep though not dangerous cut in the shoulder. Then they shook hands, honour being duly satisfied. I ought to mention one amusing point about the conditions of the duel. Count Zichy declared that he had no objection to risking his life, but that he would prefer not to exist if his musical touch were destroyed, so he asked to be allowed to wear a shield on his wrist; and his opponent magnanimously conceded this request. Fortunately no serious damage was done on either side, but when, on the evening of the fight, the victor, his arm in a bandage, came to the table d'hôte at our hotel with his beautiful wife, his wound evoked general sympathy, and his reception was triumphant.

From Tatra we made our way to a distant part of the Carpathian Range in order to see a natural phenomenon of a remarkable character. It is a good many years since Dr Browne, now Bishop of Bristol, and lately also enjoying the dignity of President of the Alpine Club, directed attention to the existence in various parts of Europe of underground glaciers, in which the manufacture of ice was carried on by some natural means never satisfactorily explained. The process of formation of an ordinary glacier is obvious enough. The snow falls on the mountain; it half melts; it partly slides downwards; fresh layers press the mass together and cause regelation; the snow becomes ice; its bulk, which is constantly diminishing below under the rays of the sun, is as steadily being augmented up above by fresh downfalls. But in the

underground glaciers the case is quite different. No snow penetrates into them, they are often situated at such a low level and in such a latitude that the surrounding atmosphere rarely falls to the freezing-point; and yet the formation of ice in them is always progressing, alike in summer and in winter. The best known of "ice caves" is that on the Beatenberg, near Interlaken, where the "Schafloch," or Sheep-hole, was discovered a good many years ago owing to the bleating of a sheep which had fallen into it. Large masses of ice are constantly being formed there, much being of considerable thickness and perfectly transparent. It is, however, situated at a height of between five and six thousand feet, the temperature of the external air is below freezing-point during a large part of the year (almost every night probably), and there are numerous glaciers in the immediate neighbourhood.

The great Hungarian Ice Cave, which Dr Browne did not have the luck to visit, besides being many times as large as the Schafloch, is unlike it in many respects. Situated near the town of Dobschau, in the Northern Carpathians, its latitude is not much above that of Vienna. Its height is little more than three thousand feet above the sea, and there is probably no glacier within some hundreds of miles. We have here a cavern, or rather a series of caverns, differing in no obvious particular from hundreds of similar cavities in which no ice is ever found; and yet, in the middle of a fir wood, a narrow cleft in the rock leads into a natural manufactory of ice on the largest scale, and as beautiful as it is wonderful. It has been reckoned that the frozen surface extends to about eight thousand square yards, while some of the mass is over a hundred feet thick. The principal cavern is three

hundred and fifty feet long, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet broad, and averages about thirty feet in height, while it has a perfectly transparent and tremendously thick floor of ice, which is often used for skating-parties. The roof is of limestone, but is completely covered with icicles; and tremendous pillars of ice, massive as the largest tree-trunks, beautifully clear and shining with dazzling splendour when illuminated, tower up to it. Here a gigantic waterfall, thirty or forty feet high, seems to have been frozen in mid-career; there a tremendous wall of what looks like the side of a glacier shows by its successive layers some characteristics of its structure. Room after room of this extraordinary formation may be traversed, and as the visitor passes through long sub-glacial passages, some natural, some artificial, he occasionally finds himself in a big cavern with walls and roof of ice, precisely below one which he has just explored. It is very difficult by mere figures to give any notion of actual size or bulk. When some terrible statistician tells you that there are 297,000,000 acres of land in North America fit for cultivation, you say "Really!" and think that while he was about it he might as well have thrown in a few millions more. But the words convey no definite notion to your mind. In the same way an estimate of the number of tons of ice in these Dobschau caverns tells us nothing comprehensible. But when I say that it takes more than half an hour to go quickly through the whole, and that you are surrounded by tremendous glacial masses all the time, some idea may be gathered of the extent of the wonderful factory which is being carried on by Nature.

I cannot help thinking that the *modus operandi* has

yet to be discovered. The popular explanation is that, as the opening of the cavern slopes downwards from the mouth into the rock, only the cold and heavy air of the winter can find admission, and that the warm and light air of the summer, having a tendency to ascend, never displaces it. According to this theory, you have only to construct a vault with a narrow passage to the open, and if you once reduce its temperature below freezing-point you can make it a perpetual freezing-machine. As the cold air is heavy, it will, *ex hypothesi*, stay at the bottom, and the warm air, being lighter, will never enter. But if this theory held good, ice caves would abound everywhere, for there must be thousands of caverns, holes, vaults, and underground recesses of various kinds which at times are filled with exceedingly cold air but which, nevertheless, do find their temperature at other times raised far above freezing-point. Is it not possible that the solution of the question may lie in the chemical constituents of the rocks in which these extraordinary caves are found? As everybody is aware, at least a dozen excellent freezing-mixtures are known to chemistry, and a large quantity of ice is manufactured easily and cheaply by their use. I fancy that at Dobschau and similar places Nature has set up a laboratory of her own, and has provided the necessary chemicals. The matter is, however, well worth the attention of the scientific world, and as this is probably the largest ice cave in existence it would furnish an excellent field for investigation. I am not aware that anything of the sort has been carried out in the years which have elapsed since my visit, and I fancy that the method of this ice-formation remains in the same obscurity as when Dr Browne first dealt with the subject.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—DYNAMITE OUTRAGE—SIR HUGH OWEN — LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT — MARGARINE—AMATEUR LAW-MAKING.

It was during the presidency of Sir Charles Dilke that the staff of the Local Government Board was reorganised, and for the first time placed on a more or less satisfactory footing. Its nucleus was the old Poor Law Board, which had been among the worst paid of Government departments, had a low standard of entrance examination, and had contained a very small proportion of men of liberal education. Yet it was as important that a candidate for a clerkship in the Local Government Board should know something of political economy, or at least should have a mind trained in such a way as to enable him to learn political economy when necessary, as that a clerk in the Colonial Office should be acquainted with some of the principles of Colonial administration, or that one in the Foreign Office should be able to appreciate the bearing of history and the effect of treaties. Goschen once said that in the Civil Service the higher class of clerks represent the partners in a concern of a most important character, namely, the administration of the business of the State. In the Local Government Board, which year by year had new

and difficult duties imposed upon it, a leaven of highly educated men was much wanted in the junior ranks, and this was secured by the reorganisation of 1884, when eight clerkships of the Higher Division were thrown open to public competition. The candidates attracted were numerous, and every one of those successful had graduated in honours at Oxford or Cambridge, while two or three were Fellows of their Colleges.

This infusion of new blood acted most beneficially, and the heads of the Department were able to delegate to subordinates some of the duties of which the enormous mass had fairly overwhelmed them. People are apt to sneer at the easy work of Government officials, but I am pretty confident that few men, in any profession, can have worked harder in dealing with very big things, and can have devoted more of their days and nights to their labours, than did Sir John Lambert, Mr (afterwards Sir Hugh) Owen, and Mr (afterwards Sir Samuel) Provis, during the first dozen years after the creation of the Local Government Board.

In those days the Board had to encounter one shock of a literal and very violent character. The Premier had deeply offended the Irish Party over the Kilmainham affair. The lives of Ministers were threatened, and they seldom dared to walk even across the Whitehall Parade without a detective behind them. The Fenians apparently adopted the Shakespearian warning, "Beware the Ides of March," as their motto, for it was on the fifteenth of that month in the year 1883 that they attempted two outrages by dynamite, both of which were fortunately as futile as they were senseless. One which scarcely did any damage was at the *Times* Office, in Printing House Square; the other, with which

I am here concerned, was at the building then occupied by the Local Government Board, in Charles Street, Whitehall. The reason for selecting this for attack was not personal. The Board's jurisdiction did not extend to Ireland, nor had either President or Parliamentary Secretary taken a prominent part in Irish questions. Besides, as the explosion took place at nine o'clock at night, it was probable that both those Ministers would be at the House of Commons. But it happened that Charles Street was then a dark and little frequented thoroughfare, running from Whitehall to the Horse Guards Parade, and this outwork of the block of Government offices furnished the easiest place for attack. As a matter of fact, the huge building was untenanted except by one belated official and two or three servants. It was behind a stone balustrade, near the main doorway, that the dynamite (of which there must have been a considerable quantity) was deposited by some miscreant whose identity has never been discovered. It must have been with much trepidation that he made his escape, for the effect of the explosion was tremendous, and it would certainly have destroyed anybody near it. It is no exaggeration to say that thousands of windows in Whitehall and Westminster were shattered, and the crash startled the House of Commons in the midst of a debate. Huge masses of stone were whirled in all directions, and a good deal of furniture was demolished. But nobody was killed, or even maimed, and the perpetrator of the outrage must have been somewhat annoyed when he found that he had risked his own life without any result, except that of giving extra work to a good many glaziers, whose charges would have to be paid from the Exchequer.

When I went to my room on the following morning, I found that the huge panes of plate glass, which were no less than three-eighths of an inch thick, had been shattered into small fragments. But as it was not my practice to devote the hours of the night to my official duties, I was not in the least intimidated. I found that in the adjacent Home Office the damage was also general, and I was shown into a room where the furniture was in wild confusion, and a huge globe had been thrown down and was lying on the floor. But an old official, with the stolidity of his class, was calmly writing, heedless of the wreck all around. His imperturbability, with the broken globe at his feet, inevitably recalled Horace's lines—

> "Si fractus illabatur orbis,
> Impavidum ferient ruinae."

There was then an epidemic of explosions, but they seemed to be always planned in a blundering fashion, and if it was desired to blow up A, it generally happened that B was attacked by mistake. I think it was Colonel Anstruther Thomson who told the story of his having called at Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn's house in St James's Square, on the evening of the dynamite explosion that blew in its windows. When he asked after Sir Watkin, who was ill, he was informed by the servant, "Please, sir, Sir Watkin has gone to bed and says he don't care a damn for anything." He might well be unconcerned, for he had not incurred the enmity of any one; and the destruction wreaked on his property was due merely to another Irish error.

Just afterwards, society was startled by the news of another terrible outrage, this time the victim being a

well-known lady of title. For a day or two it was asked, Who could be regarded as safe? uneasiness was general, and newspapers wrote scathing articles about the inefficiency of the police. When a lady said that she had been knocked down and rendered insensible by a blow, of which no trace could be found afterwards; when her assailants—of ferocious mien, and dressed in bright green so as not to be conspicuous—had passed through a populous neighbourhood without being visible to the naked eye; when a corset—which may be taken as high polite for a pair of stays—turned off two tremendous stabs from a dagger; when a gallant and gigantic dog, having driven off the villains, exhibited no signs of combat, and had not even caused them to resort to a neighbouring tailor for new pairs of trousers; when within thirty yards of the spot where the deadly struggle took place a gardener had been able to go on unconcernedly potting geraniums without a notion of the thrilling drama close by; when the heroine had been reduced to insensibility, without being wounded (beyond a few scratches which a crochet hook would have inflicted) nor robbed; when the soft soil bore no signs of the encounter—what were we to think? At first the press swallowed the story whole, then it doubted, then somebody called attention to a certain South African blue-book, which had actually caused the Secretary of State for the Colonies to cast some rude doubt on the veracity of the particular lady concerned, and then society absolutely refused to believe a word of the exciting narrative, and characterised it as sheer invention, or hallucination, or rubbish from beginning to end. Society is so sceptical.

Although the outrage at Whitehall was undoubtedly real and substantial, it had no permanent results, and,

unlike the Clerkenwell explosion, was not fated to affect the Irish policy of the Government. When the windows had been mended, everything went on as before. Sir John Lambert had been succeeded as Permanent Secretary by Mr (afterwards Sir Hugh) Owen, to whose extraordinary ability I should like to pay my humble tribute if I had not laid down for myself the rule of abstaining from discussing living men in these pages. But after all, the best thing about good resolutions is the wicked satisfaction of breaking them, and as Sir Hugh Owen is no longer in office, and as my gratitude to him is unbounded, I may venture to make an exception in his case. He seemed to me to know more of inspecting than most Inspectors, more of law than most lawyers, much more of the principles of administration than the Ministers under whom he served.[1] He was always prompt in the despatch of business (although his good nature now and then made him perhaps too tolerant of delay by others), and he would, I am confident, at any time have resigned rather than carry out a policy of which he disapproved. His memory was almost unsurpassably retentive. He stored every item of information in some separate cell of his brain, and was able to extract it, no matter how long afterwards, without a moment's delay. He was the best witness before a Royal Commission or a Parliamentary Committee that I have ever known; and his evidence, buried in many blue-books, is a storehouse of precise facts and sound opinions. Since his retirement he has been concerned in various public matters of moment, and was one of

[1] Bold was the President who ventured to disagree with him. Official tradition declares that this happened only once; that the Permanent Secretary, by quoting an old statute which nobody had heard of, demolished his Chief, who then wrote "Peccavi: proceed as proposed by Mr Owen."

the three arbitrators appointed by Act of Parliament to settle the terms of purchase of the London Water undertakings. He has received the Grand Cross of the Bath, the highest honour to which a public official can aspire, as a fitting reward for his distinguished services.

The progress of the Local Government Bill of 1888 afforded admirable scope for his powers. In multiplicity of detail, in the extent to which it affected varied interests and amended the general law, in its bearing on such involved questions as boundaries, finance, rating, rivers pollution, highways, and a score of others, it was one of the most complicated measures ever brought before Parliament. During the six or eight months that elapsed between its initiation and its passing, Sir Hugh Owen and a considerable number of his subordinates worked by day and by night, sometimes all night. The amendments proposed numbered as nearly as possible two thousand, and for each of these the Minister had to be prepared. Ritchie, indeed, in his conduct of the Bill, showed an admirable grasp of detail, and had the tact to know when to yield and when to be firm. But he would have been hopelessly swamped if the permanent staff of his Department had not possessed both the ability and the will to sacrifice themselves utterly for the sake of their chief, without any prospect of reward to themselves. And although more than a dozen persons knew the details of the measure, not a word betrayed its contents to the outside public, so the House of Commons was both startled and surprised at the Minister's statement of such important innovations as the Licensing clauses, the appropriation of particular duties in aid of local rates, and the abolition of the Metropolitan Board of Works. When the last-named body, which throughout its

existence had been notorious for jobbery, decided to signalise its extinction by one more big job, the Local Government Board checkmated this preposterous design by altering the "appointed day" for the Act's coming into operation, thus sweeping the Board of Works out of existence before it could carry out its intention. The provision authorising an alteration of day had been inserted to meet the possible necessity for postponement on account of unavoidable delay in preliminary steps, but its wording enabled the Board to advance the date, and it was thus adroitly utilised.

It often happens that a Bill which has been drafted scientifically becomes something like nonsense, owing to the amendments inserted in Parliament. The stock instance is an Act of George IV., providing that half the penalty should go to his Majesty and half to the informer, although that penalty had been altered in the House of Commons from a pecuniary fine to imprisonment and whipping. It was therefore left doubtful whether the sovereign or the informer was to be birched. The Local Government Bill, owing to the judicious fashion in which amendments were dealt with, emerged without much damage, and, considering its complexity, has given singularly little work to the Courts by any ambiguity in its provisions.

Very different was the fate of the Margarine Bill of 1887, which was not framed by the Parliamentary Draughtsman, but was, I think, adopted by the Government at the instance of the Cork butter merchants. It was referred to a Select Committee of which Sclater-Booth was the Chairman, but was a very amateurish production. One of its clauses provided that any officer authorised to act under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875, may, "without going through the form of pur-

chase provided by that Act," take samples of butter, or what purports to be butter, and have it analysed. Apparently, therefore, it enabled any inspector to enter a grocer's shop and take away butter without paying for it. Naturally the officers would choose the best butter; would find it, on applying the rough test of consumption by themselves and their wives, to be free from adulteration; would therefore not incur the cost of analysis; and would thus supply their tea-tables without any cost to themselves. No wonder the trade were aghast, and asked Sclater-Booth whether the Select Committee had proposed that this sort of robbery should be legalised. His reply was oracular. He wrote that "The intention of the words . . . was intended to secure the proper payment for the samples taken; whether they do so or not, it is not, I fear, in my power to determine." And having thus declined to interpret them, he advised his correspondent to "rely upon the above interpretation until the contrary (*sic*) is challenged." But at that time he had ceased to be a Minister and had no permanent official to frame his opinions for him. Another provision of the Act required that each package of artificial butter should bear the word "Margarine," in "capital letters, not less than a quarter of an inch square." How on earth was this direction to be carried out, for example, with regard to the letter "I"? That letter may be a quarter of an inch long, but how can it at the same time be a quarter of an inch broad? In various other particulars the Act was defective, and was mainly useful as a shocking example of the necessity for scientific precision in the very delicate and important work of framing legislation.

CHAPTER XXI.

ASCHROTT'S 'ENGLISH POOR LAW SYSTEM'—TOYS FOR WORKHOUSE CHILDREN—A PAUPER COOK—BATHING INSTRUCTIONS.

My work at Whitehall was exclusively concerned with questions more or less connected with the Public Health, and did not include any part of the administration of the Poor Law. But soon after coming to London I had become a member of the Committee of the Charity Organisation Society in St Giles's; and this, with my subsequent occupation (already mentioned) as rent collector in one of the courts of which Miss Octavia Hill had the management, had given me some small insight into the condition of the poor. I had also read a good many books dealing with this branch of economics, and had from time to time written newspaper articles upon it. I was, however, somewhat surprised to receive a visit from a well-known publisher of Poor Law literature, who asked me to undertake the translation of a German work on the English Poor Law system. Professor Henry Sidgwick, of Cambridge, had recommended it as quite the best book in existence on that subject, and Mr C. S. Loch, the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, had strongly urged the publication of an English version. I

was very reluctant to undertake what would probably be a tedious task, and I advised application to some better qualified person, since I doubted whether my acquaintance with either the German language or the English Poor Law was sufficient for the purpose. But it proved difficult to find anybody who combined the two sorts of knowledge, so I was persuaded to set to work.

Two or three years previously, the German Government had commissioned Dr P. F. Aschrott, a distinguished political economist who occupied a seat on the Prussian Bench of Judges, to inquire into our system of Poor Law administration. He had executed his task with German thoroughness. He had apparently read every treatise and every blue-book on the subject, he bombarded the officials of the Local Government Board with requests for information and assistance, he attended meetings of Boards of Guardians and Poor Law Conferences, he consulted all the experts, and he was so agreeable and so enthusiastic that nobody could refuse to help him. His book was a model of clever arrangement and clear statement. He traced the gradual development of the system from the early times when charitable relief rested exclusively with the Church; and when the abbeys, in old Fuller's words, "dispensed mistaken charity, promiscuously entertaining some who did not need and more who did not deserve it," and "did but maintain poor which they made." He gave the history of the cruelly repressive legislation against vagrancy and of the social conditions necessitating the Act of Elizabeth, which was the first statute making the nation responsible for the relief of the poor, and which remains the basis of our present system. He discussed the abuses which led to general pauperisation early in the nineteenth

century, and the trenchant reforms effected by what was known as the New Poor Law of 1834. He analysed all the Acts of Parliament in force, and so compiled a book of reference that was much wanted. Then he described and acutely criticised the various branches of central and local administration, and finally gave an exhaustive account of the methods adopted with regard to workhouse management, out-door relief, audit, the sick, the education of pauper children, lunatics, vagrancy, and a host of other matters.

I found the work of translation by no means easy. I began by attempting to make it literal, but fortunately my dear old friend, the late Gage Gardiner, laughed so heartily at the result, as exemplified in the first chapter, that I recognised my close rendering of German to be little better than pigeon-English. Then it occurred to me that I was not dealing with a treaty or other State paper in which each individual word was of consequence, so I freely translated my translation into ordinary language, and I was rewarded by the praise of one newspaper which good-naturedly said that, but for the title-page, nobody would have suspected its foreign origin. It was necessary to verify an enormous number of references, and to examine many statements on legal points, and as to this last-named matter I should have been all at sea but for the help most kindly afforded by Mr A. D. Adrian, K.C., the present legal adviser of the Local Government Board. Mr J. S. Davy, too, who was then one of the General Inspectors, and who I think had been the first to discover the excellence of the German original, also gave me valuable assistance, and so it happened that the work received very careful editing.

It was reviewed favourably by the *Spectator*, the

Saturday Review, and other newspapers, and surprised its publishers by selling well. They had said in the first instance that they expected to lose money by it, but were willing to do so because they were assured that it was the best book on the subject; and therefore they wished to have the credit of introducing it to English readers. As a matter of fact, it paid them excellently, for although it was an expensive book, a large impression was disposed of; and some years later I edited a second edition, of which, with Dr Aschrott's acquiescence, I wrote a considerable portion in order to bring it up to date.

In these days, when everybody holds up Germany as the model which we ought to copy in every respect, and especially in matters of Poor Law administration, it is worth while to remark that Dr Aschrott praised the English system in the highest terms, and expressed his opinion that in most particulars it might serve as a model for that of Germany. He considered its weak point to be its treatment of vagrants, but in other respects, and especially in its methods with regard to the sick and the children, he found it pre-eminently worthy of imitation.

It evidently would not have been fair, in anonymous contributions to newspapers, to oppose the policy of the Board, who were my masters, and I remember only one instance in which I did so. This was in what was regarded as a case of reckless misappropriation of public funds in Cambridgeshire. No less a sum than three shillings and threepence had been lavished by the Guardians of the Wisbech Union on the mere amusement of the pauper children under their charge; and precedent, often the worst enemy of progress, was outraged. The Government Auditor ruthlessly disallowed

the expenditure, and an appeal from his decision, probably involving nearly as much correspondence as would suffice a financial agent for floating a loan of thousands, was made to Whitehall. It is true that the Guardians were able to plead some extenuating circumstances. Under their care were pauper children—some orphans, all friendless—who were confined by illness to the infirmary of the workhouse, and it was to cheer these little invalids that they had actually ordered three shillingsworth of toys. One would imagine that a body standing *in loco parentis* to the children might provide the means of necessary recreation as well as of sustenance and education. It would be preposterous if football and cricket, trapbat and marbles, hockey and giant's strides, were unknown in pauper schools because the necessary implements for these diversions could not lawfully be purchased. But many years previously the legal advisers of the Local Government Board had held that expenditure for this purpose was not warranted by statute; and the rule thus laid down had been repeatedly acted on. I suppose this would have been done in the Wisbech case but for my article, in which I inveighed strongly against the doctrine that amusements were not a necessary part of the children's bringing up. At any rate, when Sir Charles Dilke was asked a question in the House of Commons just afterwards, he answered that the Local Government Board had reconsidered their previous decisions, had come to the conclusion that the charge for the toys was lawful, and had therefore reversed the disallowance. It happened that in a speech not long before he had ridiculed the Indian Government as being so much centralised that its local agent had telegraphed to headquarters, "Tiger jumping about on platform of railway-station;

please send instructions." Probably Sir Charles thought that a Board of Guardians if not allowed, without superior sanction, to spend a shilling or two for the comfort and recreation of sick children in its own workhouse, would be kept almost as much in leading-strings as the embarrassed Indian official. And the effect of the "reconsideration" was to establish a new and certainly salutary precedent. A little later a circular from Whitehall actually suggested that workhouse girls should be supplied with "a reasonable amount of skipping-ropes and battledores and shuttlecocks." Fancy Mr Bumble's feelings!

Now and then we heard of some curious instances of the eccentricities of local Guardians in carrying out their duties. One such case was that of a gentleman's cook who for some time had been in receipt of two shillings a-week from the poor rates towards the support of her two children; and as her master, a Welsh Member of Parliament, was also a Guardian and advocated a continuance of the grant, much local feeling was aroused. It was stated on her behalf that her wages were only £20 a-year, out of which she could not keep a family, so unless she received out-relief she must leave her situation, enter the workhouse with them, and thus cost the Guardians at least four times the amount of her out-relief. On the other hand, it was represented that a woman whose board, lodging, wages, and perquisites were doubtless worth between £50 and £60 a-year was not a fit object for a pauper allowance. Then the M.P. was urged to raise her wages on the rather illogical ground that it is impossible to get a good cook for £20 a-year. It was apparently forgotten that there is no legal obligation upon anybody to have a good cook if he prefers a

bad one, for sad experience teaches us that the sacred right of periodically poisoning their friends is to some people a much cherished privilege. Moreover, if the proposition be true that a good cook cannot be had for the wages which X receives, it obviously follows that X is not a good cook, and this is certainly not a reason for raising X's wages. Then it was suggested that the relieving officer should ascertain and report the money-value of the cook's perquisites—old bottles, dripping, and all. But the master strongly resented the notion of this sort of interference with his domestic affairs, although it is doubtless an essential principle of Poor Law administration that relief should not be granted without the fullest and most searching inquiry as to every source of income possessed by the applicant. Eventually the Guardians decided to continue the weekly allowance from the rates, and thus to supplement the wages paid by their colleague and Parliamentary representative.

A perhaps venerable story tells how a certain general, more distinguished for courage than for cleanliness, consulted a London physician for some ailment, and how the advice which he received was that he should daily immerse his limbs in water, heated to a suitable temperature, apply some saponaceous preparation, and subsequently expose them to the friction of woollen or cotton material. "Really," said the ancient warrior, "that sounds almost like a prescription to wash oneself." "Yes," was the answer, "it is certainly open to that objection." Many people are like the general in being utterly ignorant of any necessity for ablutions being performed in accordance with a prescribed formula. But I may note, as an instance of official concern with small details, that the Local Government Board found

it necessary some twenty years ago to issue instructions regulating the smallest details of the operation. Local intelligence was, it would seem, unequal to appreciating the fact that to put a pauper into a bath and pour boiling water over him is a plan attended with disadvantages. So the Board required that cold water should be poured into the tub before the hot; that the workhouse official should test its temperature, not by the simple process of putting his fingers in it, but by a thermometer; that its heat should never be more than ninety-eight degrees or less than eighty degrees; and that all marks on the pauper's body should be duly reported, in order to ascertain whether he had been kicked by the Poor Law officers. All these minute directions were no doubt formulated in deference to public opinion, which, though loudly denouncing centralisation, is apt to clamour almost in the same breath for grandmotherly interference in the smallest matters. Yet one would have thought that Guardians unable to manage the washing of their own paupers without the help of Whitehall, could scarcely be competent to settle more important questions.

CHAPTER XXII.

EPIDEMICS — INFLUENZA — CHOLERA PREVENTION — THE *TIMES* AND QUARANTINE—HUMOUR OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS—ABOLITION OF QUARANTINE.

The Public Health Department had its hands full of work for a good many years before I left it. Towards the end of 1889, epidemic influenza, which had been absent from this country for about forty years, began to make its way across Europe, and caused very heavy mortality in capitals so wide apart as St Petersburg, Vienna, and Paris. In the following year it spread with extraordinary rapidity over this country. Unfortunately two causes combined to promote its diffusion. It is infectious at a very early stage, and the period of incubation is particularly short, rarely exceeding three days, whereas the corresponding period in the case of small-pox is more than three times as long. The effect of this difference is easily intelligible. If a man catches small-pox he will in all probability infect nobody for about ten days, since that disease is scarcely, if at all, infectious during incubation. But if he catches influenza he may, on the third day, before the nature of his malady is recognised, give it to say half a dozen of his friends, each of whom will repeat the operation, and thus by the ninth day there will be $6 \times 6 \times 6 = 216$

cases from this single one. By the spring of 1891 it had become epidemic through most of England, and in the course of that year it was directly accountable for about seventeen thousand deaths, not including those of which it was the secondary cause. It must be owned that, like diphtheria, it appeared to be very slightly controllable by sanitary measures. The Medical Staff of the Board produced a big blue-book in which were laboriously accumulated all the facts that could be gleaned about it by Dr Franklin Parsons and other skilled scientific observers. But the result was to leave us with a sense of our helplessness. Just as one year is good for apples, another for plums, and another for pears, so one year produces a heavy crop of influenza, another of whooping-cough, and another of diphtheria. Nor, in the case of the first-named, can any one explain why, after being absent from this country for nearly half a century, it reappeared, was very fatal for something like ten years, then suddenly dropped about half its mortality, but still lingers, and shows no signs of vanishing. The law of pestilences remains mysterious, and all we can say is that influenza is one of those diseases against which no measures of prevention have hitherto been found effective.

It is very different with cholera, of which, at any rate in Western Europe, every community may have as little as it chooses. It was in 1892 that it spread over Russia and made its way to the Baltic ports. It would be ridiculous, if it were not pitiable, to observe the contrast between the different fashions in which the approach of cholera was habitually met in most foreign countries and in England. There, wild attempts were made to check it by disinfection of passengers and by police precautions. Here, we did

not think so much of combating the disease as of removing its causes beforehand. It was really astonishing that in days of scientific enlightenment the sanitary advisers of great nations like Russia and Italy should fancy that by half choking an unlucky traveller with the vapour of nitrous acid, or impregnating his clothing with a sulphurous smell suggestive of infernal agencies, they could produce the least effect on cholera germs, about which the one thing certain is that their vitality is such as to be unaffected by anything short of the heat of a Nebuchadnezzar's furnace or by long exposure to the fumes of corrosives. Only an age which believed in the existence of vinegar capable of destroying Cleopatra's pearl without destroying Cleopatra's stomach could have imagined that evil-smelling chemicals would affect the microbe without suffocating the traveller.

The sanitary survey of our ports, referred to in a previous chapter, had resulted in their being put into a fair condition of defence. Their water-supply, their sewerage, their scavenging, and their means of isolating infectious cases had been seen to, as well as their organisation for examining ships from infected ports. It seemed likely that the efficacy of the precautions would be soon tested, for a tremendous epidemic raged at Hamburg, and it was inevitable that some cases should be brought to our shores. This in fact happened. Between twenty and thirty patients, unquestionably affected with cholera, were landed and placed in hospital, but in no single instance was it communicated to any resident in England. Of course, when the disease shows itself on board ship, so that any person actually ill can be forthwith isolated, there is little risk of starting an epidemic. The danger

arises when it is not developed until the patient has had an opportunity of polluting drains, or, worse still, water-supply, with the specific poison. Such opportunities are rare in proportion as the sanitation is good, and, judged by this test, our organisation proved satisfactory.

Nevertheless the public, being thoroughly frightened,[1] raised an unreasoning clamour for the establishment of quarantine against arrivals from the Continent. They did not in the least appreciate what this meant; and, in a series of articles in the *Times*, I was able to show the absurdity of the proposal. Adopting the argument long previously used by Sir John Simon, I pointed out that quarantine would involve such inconvenience to passengers and interruption to commerce as to be unsuitable to modern conditions, and, indeed, quite intolerable. It would mean that, if we assume ten days to cover the period during which infection can be latent, ten days instead of seventy minutes would be the minimum time in which any person, sick or healthy, could enter England from the Continent.

[1] At this time everybody was talking about cholera, and at one dinner-party where it was the subject of conversation I asked a Colonel whether he had not seen a good deal of it in India. "I once died of it," he startled us by solemnly answering. "My regiment was at one of the most unhealthy stations, and men were dying like rotten sheep. I was attacked, became comatose, and was reported as dead. I was put into a coffin and taken to the barrack-yard for conveyance to the cemetery. Fortunately the lid of the coffin was not screwed down; fortunately, too, my jaw had not been bound up. For in came an Irish private, with a bottle of arrack in his hand, and as his eye fell on my unconscious form he called out, 'Bedad, here's a corpus wid his mouth open; let's give 'um a dhrop of the cratur.' And with that he poured the fiery spirit down my throat. The sergeant, who had rushed up too late to prevent the supposed profanation, was astonished to find that the effect was to make the corpse shudder. To cut a long story short, the doctor was sent for, I was taken back to my quarters and found to be alive. And here I am!" The Colonel certainly scored, for this was a story which nobody could cap.

Obviously the same system would have to be applied to all British ports, and also it would not be enough to detain only vessels and passengers coming direct from such infected places as Hamburg and Havre, since that step would merely make it necessary for people to adopt a circuitous route to England. I asked what would be the effect of enforcing a quarantine of even three or four days, to be renewed again and again on the occurrence of any case of cholera among those detained on a vessel arriving from Germany, France, Belgium, or Holland. I urged that ports like Dover, Folkestone, Newhaven, and Southampton would be crowded with vessels containing accommodation for passengers during the run of an hour or two across the Channel, but quite unfitted to house them for a lengthened period. The Thames would be blocked by steamers prohibited from discharging either their passengers or their cargoes until after a detention which would be mainly a test of the effect of the odours of a sewage-laden river on persons unused to them, and would be quite powerless to prevent the introduction of cholera. Moreover, all this inconvenience to individuals and disturbance to trade would be caused by an attempt to substitute a system which had failed for one which had succeeded, and for many years had kept Great Britain free from the epidemics of cholera that had occurred in Continental countries relying on quarantine.

I am glad to say that these articles had a good effect both at home and abroad. The *Lancet* declared explicitly that they had "given a death-blow to maritime quarantine against cholera"; and M. Monod, the distinguished man of science at the head of the French Department of Hygiene, specially expressed his appre-

ciation of them, as well as of the line of action adopted by the Local Government Board.

The measures taken by the Board were of a simple and common-sense character. The Port Sanitary Authorities were required rigorously to overhaul all ships having had actual cases of cholera on board during the voyage, to isolate in hospital any persons actually ill, and to take the names and addresses of the rest for communication to the Medical Officer of Health of the district to which they were proceeding. It would then be his duty to keep them under observation for a few days so that any outbreak among them might be promptly dealt with. An Order was issued prohibiting the landing of "persons in a filthy or otherwise unwholesome condition" if without an address at which provision had been made for their reception, and in this way a stop was put to the immigration of the class of destitute aliens who had been in the habit of coming to London to throw themselves on the charity of their countrymen already settled here. So, too, Orders were issued prohibiting the importation of rags, and also requiring water brought from an infected port in ships' tanks to be poured away and pure water to be substituted. These precautions proved thoroughly effectual, and Sir Richard Thorne Thorne, the Board's Medical Officer, was able to congratulate himself on the complete success of the system organised by the Department.

Of course some amusing instances occurred of misplaced zeal on the part of local authorities. One of these actually seized a grand piano, presumably on the ground that having come from Hamburg its notes might be affected with cholera, and various consignments of grapes and apples from Germany and France were also (quite illegally) confiscated. It was illogi-

cally assumed that because the excessive consumption of unripe fruit produces an ailment of which the symptoms in some respects resemble those of cholera, therefore perfectly ripe fruit, if grown in the neighbourhood of a town where cholera exists, must perforce be perilous.

Perhaps, however, the best stroke of humour came from the Royal College of Physicians. The Local Government Board, in order to be prepared for the possibility of the prevalence of cholera and for the consequent exercise by Sanitary Authorities of their powers of providing medicines for the sick poor, inquired what remedies the College considered best for the purpose. That distinguished body, apparently without paying much attention to the terms of the request, devoted their energies to an elaborate disquisition embodying much of the sort of advice which a fashionable physician might give to his patients. They formulated certain "Instructions," which were intended to be circulated by district visitors, nurses, and other persons employed among the poor during a cholera epidemic. The slum-dweller of St Giles's or Shoreditch was to be told that his house must be "clean, light, thoroughly dry and well-ventilated"; that he must eat three or four "nourishing and ample meals" with undeviating regularity; that he must avoid soup, cheese, and indigestible things of every kind; that alcoholic beverages might be consumed with moderation, but that "strongly ascescent sparkling wines" must be rigidly shunned, as well as "overfatigue, emotional excitement, and undue mental strain." He must "take regular exercise twice daily, follow early hours, and aim at leading a regular, an occupied, and a tranquil life."

This advice, it will be remembered, was to be addressed only to the healthy among those classes who, if they were ill, could not afford to employ a doctor; and we wondered what the costermonger of Clerkenwell or the rag-picker of Rotherhithe would be likely to think of it. He might perhaps not mind being forbidden to indulge in the "ascescent sparkling wine," which was presumably the medical euphemism for champagne, nor would he complain that in the prohibition of soups no exception was made in favour of turtle. But whether there would be any chance of his being able to take moderate exercise only twice daily, and, while invariably avoiding fatigue, to provide himself with four meat-meals, seemed open to some doubt; and possibly the "undue mental strain," of which he was to beware, might actually be caused by the difficulty of earning enough to pay for these luxuries while scrupulously abstaining from the "emotional excitement" of hawking sprats or chaffering for rabbit-skins.

When we turned from the advice for the healthy to the prescriptions for the sick, we found that the humour of the College of Physicians had run riot. We fancied that modern doctors had mostly abandoned the old practice of mixing a number of different drugs and pouring them into the human body on the off-chance that, if they failed to neutralise each other, one of them might have some beneficial effect on the patient. But each of the prescriptions furnished by the College contained no less than six medicines, of which, by the way, one or two were such as scarcely any chemist thinks of keeping in stock, and one at least was not even included in the Pharmacopœia. So the waggish prompter of the Physicians must have pictured to himself a first of April

on which everybody would be running about to get chemists to make up prescriptions for which they did not possess the ingredients. It may be added that the particular disinfectant suggested, namely corrosive sublimate, is a poison of which the general sale is prohibited by Act of Parliament, and which a private individual would therefore be unable to purchase. Fortunately the occasion for utilising these wonderful recommendations did not arise, and the College had its little joke without any bad consequences.

It is a curious illustration of our British reluctance to sacrifice old rubbish, that the Quarantine system, which, as above stated, had been entirely discarded in organising our defences against the most dangerous epidemic that could be introduced from abroad, nominally remained in force until 1896. Oddly enough, upon the consolidation of the sanitary laws in 1875, while the supervision of the public health of the country was transferred to the Local Government Board, the Privy Council had retained the function of guarding our shores by quarantine against plague and yellow-fever, neither of which was in the least likely to flourish in these latitudes. Two or three obsolete men-of-war were consequently maintained in the Solent as lazarettes, and on several occasions some unfortunate passenger-steamer, having had a case of yellow-fever on board shortly after leaving South America or the West Indies, was (if it happened to be bound for Southampton) solemnly arrested and detained opposite Cowes, apparently in order to ascertain whether a short residence on board an insanitary hulk might possibly develop another outbreak of disease among passengers or crew. But the experiment had no result except to cause some inconvenience and expense, so for many years the hulks were

lying at their anchorage fully equipped with a staff prepared, not like the British Navy in general to go anywhere and do anything, but to go nowhere and do nothing.

Here was a foolish waste of many thousands of pounds of public money. Nor was this its worst feature. It having been proved that quarantine had never been effectual in checking disease, England had persistently endeavoured to persuade the Governments of such countries as Spain, Greece, and Turkey to abandon a system of which the restrictions often pressed inconveniently upon our commerce. Foreign nations, however, had been able to point to the existence of the hulks off the Isle of Wight as a conclusive proof that Great Britain adhered to the system for herself, although, with the usual perfidy of Albion, she preached to other Powers in favour of its abolition. In 1896 the necessary Act of Parliament was passed; the ancient men-of-war (having been vainly offered to several sanitary authorities as floating-hospitals) were broken up; and quarantine disappeared in law as well as in fact. If the *Lancet* was right in ascribing this result to the *Times* articles, the country ought to have been grateful to that journal.

I ought not to omit to mention one special function which occupied much of my time at this period, namely, the official interviews with visitors on all sorts of sanitary subjects. These were so numerous that often it was difficult to find opportunity for uninterrupted application to any work requiring continuous thought. Some people came merely for information, others complained of the Board's inaction, others equally objected to its interference in this or that matter. These had to be informed, those argued with, and the rest propitiated

and quieted down. On the whole, such personal communications, though often inconvenient to a busy official from their multiplicity, are useful in making it generally understood that a public department is strictly held within the limits of its statutory powers; that its business is with principles, not with details; that it cannot supersede local authorities in matters of local administration; nor can it do for private individuals what they ought to do for themselves.

I had one amusing interview with a well-known sporting Duchess, who was anxious that the Board should send one of its Medical Staff to ascertain whether anything was wrong with the drains of her racing establishment, and who was by turns furious, threatening, humorous, and at last gently reasonable, as I persuaded her that her request really could not be complied with. I was sorry, for if I could have satisfied her I might have ventured to inquire whether the dog in her brougham was the hero of a smart saying then attributed to her. It was said that on a country railway-platform she had remarked to the station-master, "That is a good-looking terrier; where was he bred?" "We don't know, your Grace; one of the porters found him caught in a rat-trap. We haven't given him a name yet." "Got by Porter out of Trap? Stout and Gin? Call him Dog's-nose!" The name certainly fitted beautifully, though I half doubted whether a Duchess would be likely to know much about that particular mixture. Still, this was by no means an ordinary Duchess.

CHAPTER XXIII.

APPOINTMENT AS GENERAL INSPECTOR — THE EASTERN COUNTIES—FIRST IMPRESSIONS—WORKHOUSES—LADY VISITORS.

It was mainly my translation of Dr Aschrott's book, and also my association with men engaged with the Poor Law, that made me wish to take an active share in its administration. Besides, although I cannot say that my work in London had been monotonous, there was a fascination in the idea of having to deal with persons rather than with papers, and of arguing questions with local authorities by word of mouth instead of writing minutes to be dealt with by my official superiors. It happened at the beginning of 1894 that a vacancy occurred in the Board's staff of General Inspectors, and Sir Hugh Owen, then Permanent Secretary, kindly decided to recommend me for the post. Mr Fowler (afterwards Lord Wolverhampton) was so good as to appoint me; and in March I took up my duties in the Eastern District, consisting of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex—with the exception of West Ham, a Union which has of late come into unfortunate notoriety, and which for Poor Law purposes forms part of the Metropolis.

By way of preliminary I was allowed to accompany

some of my colleagues in their inspections of workhouses; and I remember well, on my first visit to an infirmary, being oppressed with an overwhelming sense of its sadness. It struck me as very different from the wards of a general hospital. There, the patients go to be cured; here, they come only to die. In Crabbe's words, they have

"Their graves before them and their griefs behind."

The pathos of the occasion and perhaps the thought of the responsibility which I was undertaking were for the moment so strong that I felt a lump in my throat. I was not sorry to go off to a lesson in the practical duties of workhouse inspection, which surprised me by its thoroughness. Beds were searched for (non-existent) intruders, children's eyes and teeth were carefully examined, and this or that case was referred to doctor or dentist; boys were stripped to ascertain their cleanliness, sanitary arrangements were closely overhauled, the food was minutely scrutinised, and so on. When we came to the books of the workhouse master, I found them so numerous and dealing with such a multiplicity of details by a sort of system of quadruple entry, that I could only hope I should some day learn why they were all necessary. This, by the way, I have never succeeded in doing; and, but for the fact that officialism is a fetish to which I dare not be disloyal, I should contend that at least two-thirds of the number are absolutely superfluous, and give a great deal of trouble without any useful result.

Another Sussex workhouse which I visited was the model of an institution in a small but rich Union. So far as the old folk were concerned it was a rather luxurious almshouse; and infinite pains seemed to be

taken to make everybody comfortable, and especially to give the children a good start in life. I was not surprised when my friend the Inspector told me of a man who argued that if he had a family of five children, and his entire capital was five hundred pounds, he would do better for them if he spent it on horse-racing and died a pauper than if he bequeathed it among them. A hundred pounds apiece would give each child only three or four pounds a-year, whereas, if they were handed over to the Guardians as penniless orphans, they would be brought up under the best conditions of housing and feeding, they would receive an excellent education, and would have a much better start in the world than would otherwise be their lot.

A few days afterwards I saw a workhouse inspected by another of my colleagues, and was again impressed with the minuteness of the examination into all sorts of small details. For the first time I learnt the danger of allowing a baby to use a feeding-bottle with a long tube, which bacilli might make their home, and was taught the proper material and cut of a pauper's shroud. I also visited the workhouse of a Metropolitan parish, but it was so enormous, and the different classes of inmates were split up among so many sections, that I was not able to glean much practical information in the short time which I could devote to it.

My district, one of the fourteen into which the country is divided, contained a population of rather more than a million and a quarter. Norfolk figured as the most pauperised county of England, and farming, the staple industry, was in a poor way. Watering-places like Southend, Lowestoft, and Cromer, and busy manufacturing towns like Ipswich and Norwich, were fairly prosperous, but in many of the rural districts the

population was decreasing. Employment had grown scarcer as the stress of bad times obliged farmers to economise by the use of labour-saving machinery, by a reduction in the number of hands engaged, and by the abandonment of the old plan of finding work for men to do in the buildings if the weather prevented their getting on the land. Thus a few days' rain used to mean that the farm-labourers worked under cover instead of in the fields; now it meant that their work and their wages were suspended until the weather became fine again. More and more land was being either turned into what is called temporary pasture, producing a scanty yield, or was left altogether uncultivated, because, although admirably fitted to grow heavy crops of wheat, the cost of cultivation would be too considerable to allow of a profit to be made out of corn at existing prices, even if there were no rent, rates, or tithes; and so the demand for labour was being diminished. Then, the veneer of education gradually acquired by the labouring classes had a tendency to make them dissatisfied with the monotony of tillage and to recognise the smallness of the wages, while they failed to appreciate such advantages, in point of health and freedom, as it offers when compared with manufacturing industries. Thus several causes combined to promote the exodus of the rural population to the towns, and as it was the young men and women who went away, leaving behind them those less active and less capable of supporting themselves, more and more people were thrown on the rates.

In most Unions where pauperism was large I found that out-relief was dispensed with the utmost freedom; and at Guardians' meetings I constantly met with cases where the applicants, if it had been refused, would

certainly have managed to maintain themselves or would have been maintained by their relatives. Everybody seemed to have a keen sense of the disgrace of entering the workhouse, but none at all of receiving outdoor relief, though in both cases alike the charge has to be borne by the ratepayers. The former was regarded as an open shame, the latter as a pecuniary arrangement not publicly known; and some Boards of Guardians favoured this view by not allowing the names of paupers to be published. No doubt in many districts the absence of systematic or organised charity makes it difficult to withhold outdoor relief in cases fitted for public or private help rather than for the Poor Law. Sometimes the Guardians' rejection of the application of a person whom nothing would induce to enter the workhouse would have the practical effect of throwing his or her support mainly on the parson or the squire of the parish, and both clergymen and landowners are now so impoverished as to be unable to undertake burdens of this sort, which were cheerfully borne in better times.

Probably much of the antipathy to workhouses is a survival from the times when the inmates dragged out a wretched and toilsome existence. At any rate, "workhouse" is now a misnomer, as may be gathered from the fact that in many of them labour has to be hired, even for washing and scrubbing. The aged and infirm enjoy a large amount of liberty, they are only set to such light tasks as are sufficient to occupy them pleasantly, and in all material conditions of feeding, housing, and clothing they are much better off than the aged poor outside. When one sees knots of the old men gossiping by the fire or basking in the sun, when one finds the bedridden old women carefully

nursed and appropriately fed, it is difficult to help contrasting their condition with that of some of the village poor, who live in miserable dwellings, and are half starved on the pittance which they obtain from their scanty earnings or from private charity. I have often heard an aged inmate say that he had always declared he would die rather than enter "the house," but that if he had known that it was so comfortable he would have come there long ago.

I naturally found immense differences in the degrees of comfort in workhouses. In a few there were the bare whitewashed walls, the cheerless brick floors, the primitive sanitary arrangements, which used to be common a quarter of a century ago, but are now an exception. In a good many, where the administration had been liberal as well as intelligent, the inmates were excellently housed as well as fed. Most of the buildings were very old, but the difficulties thus caused had often been skilfully overcome. Still, the accommodation for the sick was usually far inferior to that afforded in the wards of general hospitals, and I made a point of impressing on Boards of Guardians that sickness, like love, levels all, and that the rates ought to provide as well for the pauper patients as voluntary contributions provide for the labouring classes in County Hospitals.

The nursing was the weakest point. Not infrequently a single paid nurse was in charge of thirty or forty patients, and this meant that almost everything for the sick had to be done by pauper inmates. They had nothing to gain if they did the duty assigned to them well, nothing to lose if they did it badly; the fact that, being able-bodied women, they were workhouse inmates proved, *primâ facie*, that they were not of high

character; so most of them were not disposed to take much trouble in attending to helpless old folk requiring assistance in various respects by night and by day. But things were steadily mending. Guardians were beginning to recognise the fact that nursing is a skilled business, and that it is worth while to pay for its being done properly. I was always glad to receive information of some defect that ought to be looked into on my next inspection; although now and then it happened that I had to throw cold water on the suggestion of a well-meaning visitor. Here is some correspondence with one who found fault with the straw mattresses in general use:—

"Will you kindly tell me (1) whether you do not consider that flock beds are more suitable than straw mattresses for use in workhouse infirmaries, and (2) whether it is not desirable to rouse and amuse the bedridden inmates, who now seem to spend their whole time in silently gazing at the ceiling?" My reply was as follows: "I may answer your questions almost in Longfellow's words. You know his lines,

> 'There is no flock, however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there;
> There is no household, howsoe'er defended,
> But has one vacant chair.'

My version would be,

> 'There is no "flock," however patched and mended,
> But some fleas will get there;
> There's no old pauper, howsoe'er attended,
> But has a vacant stare.'

In plain prose, a flock bed harbours insects, to say nothing of the fact that the material has a knack of disposing itself in little lumps which scarify the backs of the patients; while straw mattresses, if properly

filled, are very comfortable, and moreover, can be renewed at no cost whenever necessary. I believe that the opinion of both officials and inmates is unanimous in their favour. As to 'rousing' the aged paupers, I think that many of them prefer to be left in peace. I value visitors to workhouses enormously—especially such lady visitors as possess tact as well as kindliness—but I fear that now and then their attentions are thrown away on some of the very aged and infirm, who really only want to be at rest. By all means go and see the bedridden folk, but pray, let your 'rousing,' like Bottom's 'roaring,' be as gentle as that of any sucking dove." This advice, though not couched in very official language, was well received, for it elicited the answer—"Thanks for your letter, which seems to me to contain more sound sense than I can find in most poetry."

With a little more experience I should certainly have added a reference to the extraordinary success of the Brabazon Society in devising occupation for workhouse inmates. They have really done wonders in teaching old people, whose gnarled and gouty and rheumatic fingers often seemed absolutely incapable of any delicate work, to produce all sorts of quite artistic effects in wool, leather, or basket-work. The old, who used to have nothing to do but quarrel with each other, now thoroughly enjoy their lessons from the ladies of the Society. A pleasant rivalry is stirred up among them, and the sales of their productions from time to time yield a fund for such excursions and other treats as could not be paid for out of the rates.

The management of a workhouse depends mainly on the Master. He has to be a despot, and usually he is

subject to very little control in the intervals between the weekly, or more commonly the fortnightly, meetings of the Guardians. Most of the Guardians, especially in rural Unions where the distances are great, rarely visited the workhouse. It frequently happened that the Visiting Committee met only on Board days; solemnly marched through the different wards under the guidance of the Master; inspected the provisions; examined the condition of the beds, or at any rate of the clean sheets which had possibly been placed on them an hour or two earlier; and had scarcely any communication with the inmates. This was the condition of affairs when I began my work as Inspector; and Mr Fowler's Order of 1893, expressly giving authority to every individual Guardian to visit any part of the workhouse at any time, had an excellent effect in bringing abuses and grievances to light. It is true that the Order is rather too wide in its terms, and has in some instances led to abuses on the part of indiscreet or nasty Guardians. But in a circular the Board construed the words "any time" as "any reasonable time," and they have in various cases expressed an opinion that only in very exceptional circumstances should a visit be paid late at night, and not to a sick ward at night without the Medical Officer's consent, nor at all at night by a male Guardian to female wards.

Even in the most trivial matters connected with workhouse visiting, tact and common-sense are required. Consultation with the officers in the first instance is always desirable, and I have known of a case in which a visitor, ignoring this rule, distributed flowers among occupants of the Infirmary, with the result that one patient, an imbecile, proceeded to eat

them—stems, leaves, berries and all—and was nearly killed by this unusual food. Another most worthy and well-intentioned person habitually went to read to the patients just at their meal-time, when the old and sick particularly dislike being disturbed. Too often I found that visitors had suggested grounds of complaint to inmates who before were very well contented, but afterwards acquired a habit of grumbling. As a rule they are inclined to make the best of things; and I came across one instance in which two bedridden men had for many months gone dinnerless twice a-week because the food happened to be such as they were unable to digest. When I told the Master that this fact, which I discovered in the course of a chat with one of the men, ought to have been observed long before, he could only say that they had made no complaint; and this was perfectly true. Of course I called the Medical Officer's attention to the matter, and they were at once put on special diet.

In other ways I found that the increase of workhouse visiting, especially by ladies, was valuable. The Nurses, particularly in small, rural workhouses, often have a sadly monotonous life. They have few of what are called interesting cases, and lose their skill because they are rarely concerned with operations of importance, while their chief occupation is that of feeding and keeping clean a number of old people who are slowly dying. Much of their work is, in point of disagreeableness, akin to scavenging, and their lives are very solitary. Sometimes they do not get on very well with the Matron, for the duties of the two offices overlap in a fashion which ought long ago to have been set right; and now and then it happens that a nurse has scarcely any educated person to talk to. Lady visitors have

done a great deal to supply this want, and many a nurse has been cheered and encouraged by their friendly sympathy.

So too with the children. The common plan in rural districts is for them to live in special quarters of the workhouse and to be taught in the village school. Visiting Guardians may do much not only by scrutinising the clothing, the health, the feeding, and the lavatory arrangements, but also by looking after their amusements and ascertaining the sort of influence exercised by the officials specially in charge of them. The holidays are often a difficulty, for it is bad for the children to be shut up in the workhouse under strict discipline, while if they are allowed ample freedom they are apt to come in contact with evilly disposed adults. Arrangements can generally be made for their sharing in the cricket, football, and other amusements of children of the independent poor, but I had to object to a decision of one Board of Guardians to permit the boys to "turn cartwheels" in the street in order to attract the pence of tourists on excursion cars.

The nursery is often a neglected part of the workhouse, and a lady guardian gave me a useful hint on the subject. I had inspected various nurseries without paying attention to the very important question of aspect, and it happened that I visited one which was spacious, well ventilated, and generally unobjectionable but for a single drawback. "Don't you observe," said the lady, "that these poor little things never get a ray of sunshine?" I then saw that the only windows on the south were blocked by the shadow of buildings, and that the others were in the north wall, on which the sun never shone. I fully admitted the importance of the point, and had not much difficulty in persuading

the Guardians to transfer the infants to a sunny room. The lesson thus given me by Miss Buxton (whose name I mention with gratitude) has never since been forgotten.

I had in general good reason to appreciate the skill and attention devoted to the sick inmates by the Medical Officers, and their work has seemed to me to be very inadequately represented by their pay. But in some exceptional cases I found from the porter's book (in which are registered every entrance and exit to and from the workhouse) that particular doctors were devoting only a few minutes to their Infirmary patients two or three times a-week. This had to be set right. Perhaps it is worth while to mention that the Medical Officer whom I should single out as most attentive to workhouse patients and as most welcomed both by men and women, was a lady.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BOARDS OF GUARDIANS—ESSEX AGRICULTURE—AN INSPECTOR'S DIFFICULTIES—KING EDWARD'S SUGGESTION—CLASSIFICATION IN WORKHOUSES—OFFICIAL INQUIRIES—A THREE-CORNERED DUEL.

My first experience of Boards of Guardians was in their unreformed character. It was not until 1895 that, under Sir Henry Fowler's Act of the previous year, the franchise was lowered, monetary qualifications were abolished, and Justices of the Peace ceased to be *ex officio* members. It was anticipated in many quarters that there would be a revolution in the composition of the Boards; that old methods would be discarded; that out-relief would be distributed with little regard to the necessities of the applicants; and that in the abolition of *ex officio* Guardians a useful and moderating element would be lost. Yet in rural districts, at least, there was no sweeping change. Most of the Chairmen of the old Boards were re-elected; such of the Justices as had taken an active part in Poor Law administration were co-opted; and there was no substantial increase in pauperism. A distinct advantage, indeed, arose from the additional interest which was taken in this class of public business; and more people were found willing to throw themselves into the work with heartiness, and to

take trouble in order to learn the principles by which they ought to be guided.

At some of the Board meetings which I at first attended it was impossible to help seeing that the demons of precedent, of routine, and of dulness held sway, and that an infusion of new blood and new methods was desirable. Here and there the chairmen were obstacles to reform. They had perhaps occupied their posts for many years, having been elected again and again even when age had enfeebled them; and they suspected all novelties. In one instance I was advocating the provision of nightshirts for the workhouse children. But this was stoutly opposed by the worthy farmer who was temporarily occupying the chair. "I puts on a clean shirt," he said, "on Sunday morning, and I never takes 'un off till I puts on another the next Sunday. What's good enough for me is good enough for these 'ere children in the workus, and I'm agin all this cosseting." Nevertheless the Guardians, to his great disgust, granted the nightshirts. In most of the Unions business was conducted in a tolerably business-like way, but not so well as nowadays. Sometimes I was appalled by the want of order and system. All the Guardians seemed to be speaking at once, resolutions and amendments were heaped upon each other in wild confusion, and the whole procedure was absolutely haphazard. One of my earliest visits was paid to the meeting of the Workhouse Committee of a large town; and here, notwithstanding the presence of a stranger, the Guardians squabbled till they almost came to blows; hid away under the chair-cushions each others' notes for speeches; played a practical joke on one of their number, who happened to be a teetotaler, by concealing a sample bottle of brandy (sent with a tender) in his coat-tail pocket; and were

altogether childish. The Chairman was *fortiter in modo, suaviter in re*, and alternately called people loudly to order without the least effect, and accepted the most foolish and irrelevant proposals. Such a bear-garden I had never seen, and I wondered whether this was an average sample of the management of Poor Law business. Luckily it was by no means a fair specimen, and I have never since come across anything quite equalling it in point of badness.

Now and then it happened, even when the chairman regulated the procedure well, that he despotically enforced his own opinion, however much it disagreed with the teachings of modern science. The Earl of Kimberley, Chairman of one of the Norfolk Boards, was one of this sort. It chanced that I had to ask the Guardians to spend some money in improving the bathing and sanitary arrangements at their workhouse, which were of the most primitive description. But he gave me no chance of success. He actually objected to baths as dangerous to health, and assured me that when Foreign Secretary he had observed that the era of widespread epidemics of typhoid fever in Italy had begun with the introduction of modern sanitation in houses. It was useless for me to point out that since the general reform in such matters in England, not only typhoid fever but other "filth diseases" had been diminishing steadily year by year. Lord Kimberley would not pay attention to anything outside his Italian precedent—as to which, by the way, I should have much liked to examine the facts and figures. Anyhow, the Wymondham Workhouse had to wait.

A curious illustration of the working of the rural mind came before the same Board of Guardians in the application of an old labourer. He was in receipt of a

pension of half-a-crown a week from his late employer (who happened to be Lord Kimberley), and the Guardians proposed to take this sum into consideration in fixing the amount of his out-relief. He objected strongly. He said he did not want the rates to be saved at his lordship's expense; and if the Guardians would not give him the ordinary allowance, without counting his pension, he would take an order for the workhouse, and they would have to keep him entirely. Then he would not cost his lordship anything. I liked the firmness with which he insisted that if the pension was not to benefit himself he would go into the workhouse rather than throw the burden on his old master.

At that time a good deal of discussion happened to take place in the newspapers as to the cruelty of separating husband and wife in the workhouse, and a notion existed that the law requiring Guardians to make provision for the accommodation of aged couples had been generally disregarded. This was certainly not so in my district, but I found that the old people often objected to live together. Sometimes this may have been out of mutual weariness—like a character in Molière's "Amphitryon," they felt that after many years of marriage everything had been said—but it was generally because one of the pair had become so infirm as to require help in the way of nursing, which the other was unable or unwilling to give. I was present[1] when the Chairman of a Board of Guardians, on being told by an old woman that she would not live any longer

[1] This story will now be regarded as a "chestnut," for it has had extraordinarily wide circulation. It appeared in my Official Report for 1895, from which it was extracted and went the round of the London newspapers. A year later I saw it in one published as far off as Rangoon, and long afterwards it was the subject of a clever sketch in *Punch*. But it originated in the Norfolk Workhouse where I heard it.

with her husband, asked "Why? Does he beat you?" She answered, "Beat me? Lord bless his heart, no. He treats me more like a friend than a husband." (An illustration of an old-fashioned view of marital privileges.) "But I've tended him as long as I could, and I can't do it no longer." Thus in many instances husband and wife contentedly lived on different sides of the workhouse, and the married couples' quarters were seldom occupied. This is a fact that should not be lost sight of by the persons who write pathetically as to the hardships of a separation which in my experience is commonly the voluntary act of the supposed sufferers.

In the early part of 1895 relief agencies of all sorts, public and private, were tested by what I suppose was the hardest winter of modern times. A tremendous frost set in at the beginning of January, and continued, with scarcely a break, until about the middle of March. The effect was to suspend almost all labour on the land and to block the inland waterways. So it might have been expected that the strain on the Poor Law administration would be excessive. Owing, however, partly to the increased thrift of the working classes, partly to the energetic efforts of special organisations, those terrible ten weeks of frost were got through without any more pressure on the poor rates than was represented by a temporary increase of 10 per cent in the number of paupers as compared with those in the mild winter of the previous year. In many places much was done by relief associations of various kinds. Soup-kitchens were established and special funds were raised by subscriptions. In one or two towns labour-yards were set up by Guardians, and public works by municipal authorities, both having a tendency, as it seemed to me, to pauperise the population and to take money out of the

pockets of sometimes needy ratepayers, in order to put it into those of unthrifty men who were only inclined to play at working. I believe that private charity was amply sufficient to provide for the temporary needs of the industrious, and I have always appreciated the wisdom of Goschen's celebrated memorandum on the danger of doing away with the boundaries between almsgiving and relief from the rates.

In the autumn of that year, at the instance of the Board of Agriculture, who had been appealed to for some such aid on behalf of the Essex farm-labourers as had been given to the Lancashire operatives in the time of the cotton famine, I was instructed to inquire into their condition and to make a special report on the subject. I found that in the whole of the county (excluding West Ham) on the 1st of January 1895, the number of paupers was only 16,763, or 4 per cent of the population, whereas on the 1st of January 1870 it had been 24,761, or 7·7 per cent. These comparative figures, dating from a time when rents and the price of corn were high, and farming was a profitable business, were very remarkable, as showing the extraordinary diminution which had taken place in pauperism, notwithstanding the severe depression in agriculture. The number of paupers is doubtless not a measure of general distress, but is yet an index to it; and when it appeared that in none of the Unions were the paupers as numerous as in 1870, it was pretty clear that the labourers were not the class who had been hit hardest by the bad times for farming. Wages had been reduced, more and more arable farms were being laid down in grass, and therefore required much less labour than before. But this change had not come all at once, for it had been in progress ever since 1879, universally regarded as the

"black year" of agriculture. Many of the able-bodied had already gone to the towns, and there was less likelihood of an overwhelming increase in pauperism because there were fewer persons to become paupers.

I came to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the badness of the harvest, there was no reason to apprehend any serious increase of either pauperism or poverty; and the Board of Agriculture, their apprehensions relieved, expressed Mr Walter Long's "personal appreciation" of what was flatteringly called my "very able and exhaustive report." My anticipations were more than justified; for, in the following winter, Essex pauperism actually diminished; and although agriculture in those heavy clays cannot even now be called flourishing, farmers and labourers are much better off than when I wrote.

Starting on my work as Inspector without any written instructions whatever, and possessing only such acquaintance with principles as I had been able to glean from my own reading, I should have been very much at sea but for the help of Sir Hugh Owen. Like most men who get through an enormous amount of work, he always seemed to have plenty of leisure, and he encouraged Inspectors to consult him personally about the condition of their districts and to discuss their difficulties. This was a great advantage, especially to a new Inspector, while it gave the Permanent Secretary a knowledge of the details of administration throughout the country which nobody else possessed, and which his astounding memory enabled him always to have at his immediate command.

I have frequently wondered why, until quite recently, it has not been the practice of the Presidents of the Local Government Board to have more personal com-

munication with their Inspectors, from whom they could easily obtain trustworthy information as to all parts of England. The organisation for this purpose is complete, but my own experience suggests that in the past it has been very little utilised. I think that in the course of my first dozen years as Inspector I did not have in the aggregate half an hour's conversation as to my districts with the five Presidents under whom I served, and two of them I did not even know by sight. Nor did much opportunity exist for an Inspector's informing himself on the various matters of policy and practice which from time to time cropped up. When his present Majesty, then Prince of Wales, as one of the Royal Commissioners on the Aged Poor, was examining Mr J. S. Davy as witness, his Royal Highness asked, "Are there any means by meetings or conferences of Inspectors by which systematic efforts might be made to extend throughout the country the more successful efforts made in some Unions to alleviate the cheerless life of the inmates of workhouses by agreeable occupation?" To this the answer was, "No, Sir; I think an Inspector has to pick up as best he can what is going on in other districts. He meets his colleagues informally, but we have no general meeting now; we had at one time, but they have been given up." The Prince asked whether the object would not be gained by their meeting more frequently, but the answer was "I think, practically, we pretty well know what is going on." I must own that, when Sir Hugh Owen's advice was no longer available, I felt the need of such meetings, and I am glad that recently they have been resumed. It has happened to me to advise a Board of Guardians quite wrongly as to the Board's views with regard to an important point in the grant of relief,

because I had not been made aware that some months previously the precedents had been superseded and the official doctrine on the subject entirely changed.

It was towards the end of 1895 that the opinion of the Inspectors was invited upon the question of classification in workhouses, and I made inquiries in order to ascertain what measures had been feasible in practice to keep inmates of good and of bad character apart. I found that very little had been done in this direction except that, in the able-bodied class, girls of good character were often set to do housework, more or less by themselves, instead of being sent to the laundry, where women of a very low stamp are employed and the language in use leaves much to be desired.

Despite Mill's arguments and Sydney Smith's ridicule, I believe that it is not in human nature for the administrators of the Poor Law absolutely to disregard the character of those whom they relieve. In practice it is (although very roughly and superficially) often taken into account in determining whether relief to the aged should be indoor or outdoor, and I should be glad if the treatment of the indoor paupers could be made to depend upon it.

But, especially in the small rural workhouses of the Eastern counties, some practical difficulties appeared to me to stand in the way of any formal Regulations on the subject. Is the applicant for relief to be classified, whether as a Sheep or a Goat, at the time of his coming before the Board of Guardians? If so, they must consider his previous character, the evidence of which would probably be contained in a statement of a Guardian of the parish or from a Minister of religion. Such papers would probably be about as accurate as most testimonials. On their being discussed, either

one parish would be pitted against another, and each case would be hotly fought over with much acrimony and waste of time, or else, for the sake of peace and the despatch of business, nearly all applicants would be placed among the Sheep. On the other hand, if paupers were classed according to their behaviour in the workhouse during a probationary period, there would be the drawback that whatever precautions were taken to make the Guardians or the House Committee responsible, they must necessarily proceed on the report of the Master, whose already despotic powers would thus be increased to an undue extent, with the result that the baser sort of inmates would be even more subservient and more anxious to curry favour than they are at present. Besides, it often happens that respectable and previously well-to-do people have been soured by their misfortunes and resent the application of necessary rules, whereas it is a matter of common experience that ex-convicts, by force of habit, are most submissive to discipline. Nor would it make the workhouse more attractive to the decent poor to know that if they passed a month or two of probation without flagrantly misconducting themselves, they would be placed in a class from which it would be found in practice difficult to exclude any but the outrageously disreputable.

I admitted that the objection to the association between different sorts of inmates was not merely sentimental but real. Still, I thought that it was felt much more strongly by educated people of smug respectability, who judge others from themselves, than by those of the social residuum who are actually concerned. The outward decencies of life are generally maintained, and the chief complaint is of bad language.

Yet it must be remembered that what is "bad" and what is merely vulgar are often confused. The particular word, shocking to a delicate ear, the use of which specially marks the lowest classes of the community, is in itself perfectly harmless, being neither obscene nor blasphemous, and having, so far as I am aware, no secondary meaning which is either. It would not be easy to prevent any class of workhouse inmates from hearing language which is conventionally vulgar. But this is not very important because even the least degraded, in their downward course towards destitution, have become pretty well accustomed to a good deal that is coarse. I believe that the ordinary conversation in the workhouse is better than that in the average village, and much less objectionable than that in the average public-house, because in the workhouse the officials at once check any verbal outrage. If any inmate is habitually foul-mouthed and gravely indecent in speech, the Guardians and the Master have ample powers of punishment. But in workhouses, as elsewhere, like gravitates to like, the more respectable associate chiefly with those of the same character, and the more disreputable keep each other company.

It appeared to me that in most workhouses special care might well be taken to keep respectable young women (such as girls brought up in the workhouse and about to be sent out to service, and servants out of place) absolutely apart, in work and in dormitories, from the rest of the able-bodied, and perhaps also to arrange the beds of the old and the sick so that their neighbours should not be unnecessarily offensive to them. So too, where the numbers are sufficient, individual characteristics might be taken into account in the assignment of particular inmates to particular bed-

rooms and day-rooms. But I doubted whether, in small workhouses, it was possible to do more than suggest to Masters and Matrons this sort of informal arrangement—which might be carried out by judicious officers, but could not easily be brought within the terms of an Order. I believe that in general hospitals classification by character is not attempted.

Inspectors of the Local Government Board are intrusted with special statutory powers as to official inquiries and the examination of witnesses on oath; and certain superior officers of the Guardians cannot be discharged except with the approval of that Board, which is scarcely ever given without local investigation. I had to hold several such inquiries in the Eastern counties, and one difficulty struck me, namely, that if the inculpated officer was found guilty there was no middle course between dismissing him, probably to his utter ruin, and letting him off with a mere caution or censure about which he perhaps cared nothing. It would be useful if somebody could devise a *tertium quid*, such as the loss of seniority, which sometimes follows a court-martial in the Royal Navy. But that particular punishment is obviously inapplicable.

One of my investigations related to a curious case in which the funeral of an old man who had died in the workhouse had taken place and had been attended by several relatives. The body had been conveyed in a shell to the mortuary, to which a coffin had been sent for its reception. The lid had been screwed down, the coffin was placed in the hearse and duly buried, and nobody suspected that anything had gone wrong until the next morning. Then an inmate who went to sweep out the mortuary was frightened by the sight of the corpse. "Mercy! Here's old Tom come back!" he

cried in terror. It was found eventually that, by an almost inconceivable piece of carelessness, the body had been left in the shell, and only the coffin had been buried. The responsibility was so much divided that it was difficult to apportion the blame among the persons concerned; but the case led the Local Government Board to issue fresh instructions designed to prevent such mischances in future.

Another Public Inquiry dealt with the delinquencies of a solicitor whom the Guardians had dismissed for drunkenness from the office of Clerk. Counsel were retained on both sides, and I expected that the charges would be stoutly contested. But when witness after witness had been examined on behalf of the Guardians, and no attempt was made to shake their evidence as to the Clerk having more than once been very drunk during Board meetings, I inquired whether rebutting testimony was to be called. This question was answered in the negative, so I suggested that Counsel and Clerk should confer with me in private. I then put it to the Clerk that if he had no defence to make it might be well for him to resign forthwith so as to avoid the further washing of dirty linen in public. "Resign," he said, "not a bit of it. If I resign, my salary will cease to-day, whereas if I leave it to your slow old Board to turn me out they will take a month to do it, and my pay will be running on all that time." I closed the inquiry as soon as possible, and reported in favour of dismissal. But his anticipations were to some extent realised, so his knowledge that the mills of the official gods grind slowly saved him something in hard cash.

Drunkenness is really one of the hardest questions to deal with, because opinions as to what constitutes it are so conflicting. On the magisterial bench the decision

is comparatively easy, because a man is usually charged with being "drunk and incapable" or "drunk and disorderly." But how is one to adjust the moral barometer when the person inculpated never has to be carried to bed, is never violent in his cups, and merely takes enough, day after day, to half-stupefy himself? I had a case of this sort with regard to the Master of a workhouse whom the Guardians had dismissed for his excesses, but who had committed no overt act of folly. A Colonel who was their principal witness declined to swear that he had found the man drunk, though he had known him to be "cocked." This was a new epithet to me, and I asked for a synonym. "Well," said the witness, "I should say that he was inebriated." Afterwards a curious point arose. An inmate had declared that he had often seen the Master "when he had had a glass or two," and had given the Guardians to understand that he was prepared to prove him to have been frequently affected by drink. But something induced this witness to change sides, and on being called he stoutly denied that he had ever known the Master to be under the influence of liquor. "Then what did you mean," said the solicitor, "by saying that you had seen him when he had had a glass or two?" "I only meant," was the reply, "that I had seen him after he had had his dinner, but it had no effect on him." The solicitor hammered away, but could get no further. Then I gently inquired, "Did you ever see him drink?" "Never," was the reply. "Then how did you know that he had 'had a glass or two,' if he did not show himself to be under the influence of liquor?" To this there was no answer; and in the result the Master, who was really a regular "boozer," was dismissed from his post.

Elsewhere I had to report on what was really a three-cornered duel between an Official (who happened to be the leading solicitor in the town), a Workhouse Medical Officer, and one of the Nurses to the Infirmary, while some lady Guardians of unlimited energy also fired occasional shots. After the interval of a dozen years I have only a vague remembrance of the complicated drama which had led up to the combat. I recollect that the principal characters were a pretty nurse, a polite doctor, and a whimsically mischievous official who played tricks on everybody, — to say nothing of a young lady who had been married to an aged husband, and whose domestic disagreements suggested that autumn manœuvres are not always a success. Imputations were recklessly bandied about; and a caricature, representing nurse and doctor as familiarly enjoying cigarettes together, was not only handed round at a Board meeting, but was forthwith sent (anonymously) to the doctor's wife. In order to unravel all the threads of a tangled web I was instructed to hold a formal investigation, to which eminent Counsel were brought down "special" from London at considerable cost. The proceedings lasted two whole days, and the reports filled entire sides of the local newspapers. The Court was crowded throughout with a delighted audience, and now and then I had hard work to restrain the fun, which was fast and furious. Of course the usual attempts were made to introduce obviously inadmissible evidence; and once, when Counsel pleaded "vox populi, vox dei," in deprecation of my refusal to allow a witness to repeat mere local gossip, I had to say that neither "populus" nor "deus" was included in the list of subpœnas which I had issued. In the upshot, the official was solemnly

censured, and was warned against a repetition of his "fourberies de Scapin," but the nurse, against whom even the allegation as to cigarettes was disproved, was acquitted without a stain of smoke on her character, and the doctor was relieved from the imputation of having basked in the smiles of a Venus di Medico. They had among them afforded much amusement to the residents in a popular watering-place. Nobody could claim the honours or the horrors of Holloway, though I obtained a sort of dim notion as to what might happen when Jack in office and Jill in office come into collision.

In November 1896 the Inspectorship of the South-Western District became vacant by the resignation of Lord Courtenay, and as it happened that my wife's health required a milder climate I was glad to be transferred to that District, especially as it offered ample scope for reforms in administration. I had found the East Anglians delightful, and had got on with them thoroughly well, but the winter winds had frozen us, and I was not sorry to leave the grey and sombre tints of Suffolk for the blue skies and the red rocks of Devon.

CHAPTER XXV.

REVIEWING—MINOR POETS—A WOULD-BE LAUREATE—BATHOS—MURRAY AND LEIGHTON—RUSSIAN PRISONS—WELSH CELEBRITIES.

When I left London my leader-writing was substantially at an end, as editors naturally require their literary hacks to be in the stable and not in the field; and in the provinces it is not easy to keep oneself posted in the social and political occurrences which are discussed in the smoking-room of every club in Pall Mall. Fortunately I took kindly to the work of reviewing, and for a long time was entrusted by the *Morning Post* with the criticism of a large proportion of the most important books published.[1] This was just the sort of occupation which it was convenient to take up; for as both my Local Government districts were of considerable area, I necessarily spent much time in railway journeys, and these were pleasantly beguiled by reading, for example, Curzon's Central Asia, Bodley's France, Byron's Letters, Milner's Egypt, Shirley's Table-Talk, Mahan's Ironclads, Mau's Pompeii, Butler's Dante, Biographies and

[1] I find that between 1893 and 1907 I reviewed altogether over 800 books, my notices ranging in length from a couple of columns to only a few lines.

Reminiscences of Max Müller, Grant Duff, "Nineveh" Layard, Sir William Molesworth, and other celebrities, to say nothing of each new contribution to Alpine literature, a host of books on sporting subjects, and indeed all sorts of works ranging from the frigidity of Arctic exploration to the heated problems of sex and heredity. Moreover, the poets, most of whom might be described as minor, and some as minimus, were nearly all handed over to my tender mercies, with the frequent result of making me doubt whether blank verse is not so called because no adjective bad enough for it is printable.

When Scott declared poets to be a simple race on whom flattery is never lost, and who "waste their toil for the vain tribute of a smile," he gave in a few words the *raison d'être* of most of the pretty little volumes of verse which nowadays issue in such profusion from the press. All that the authors want is a meed of praise, and if they receive it they are happy. If, on the other hand, it is withheld, they regard the critic as their natural enemy, prompted by private malice or by professional jealousy to crush their genius, or perhaps framed too coarsely to appreciate their refinement. They are quite unable to understand that he often devotes an enormous amount of labour to a search for gems of thought, and that his delight, on the rare occasions when he finds something brilliant, is as great as that of Keats's "Watcher of the Skies When some new planet swims into his ken." Unfortunately, many attain respectable mediocrity untouched by a breath of inspiration. If they were very good they would be attractive; if they were very bad they would be amusing; but when they produce countless lines which scan fairly and rhyme sufficiently, which have appro-

priate adjectives and well-worn similes, which gush about bowers and flowers, leaves and sheaves, rivers and shivers, loves and doves, kisses and blisses, and which never get beyond being readable and graceful, one is tempted to despair. Our Elementary Schools are turning out many thousands of children annually, with just enough veneer of education to make them discontented with manual labour; and the age seems to be producing many hundreds of writers with just enough culture to give them a contempt for prose, although they do not possess the least talent for poetry.

"Conscious as we are," ran the Judges' memorial, "of our own imperfections"; "conscious as we are," suggested Lord Justice Bowen, "of each other's imperfections"—might not the idea be applied to the publication of verses? Could we not have a literary law that no minor poet should be allowed to give his productions to the world without having previously submitted the proof-sheets for the comments, corrections, and excisions of, let us say, half a dozen of his fellow-craftsmen? As an excited but rather confused orator is reported to have said, "Many a man sees the mote in his brother's eye although he cannot see the camel in his own"; so probably each of the six, while blind to his own peculiar defects, would have a keen sense of those of his competitors for public favour. Still, the poets might be so mutually destructive that, on the proofs returning from their round, little would be left unobliterated, and thus a good deal of remunerative labour would be withheld from the printer and the bookbinder.

An alternative may be suggested. Might not the aspirant, before publishing his poems and thus almost

inevitably losing a good deal of money,[1] try their effect on an audience. Even better, half a dozen versifiers might combine, advertise an entertainment (to which it would be well to add the attraction of light refreshments, if not chicken and champagne) at which each of them should be allowed, say a quarter of an hour, for reading choice bits from his own verses; and at the end the audience should be invited to give their votes (preferably by ballot, in order to avoid unpleasantness) for or against publication in each case. They might also be asked to specify any gems which had particularly impressed them. Of course the whole thing would want a good deal of organisation, but the rough idea might be elaborated; and in these days of lectures, sermons, political speeches, and platform oratory of all kinds, the plan might prove popular. Yet, how about the authors? They are a sensitive and irritable race; they are mostly exceedingly vain. How many would be found to submit themselves to a test of this kind, and, if so, how would they fare?

I think the best illustration of self-confidence that I ever met with was the publication of a collection of verses called 'A Bid for the Laureateship,' by Thomas J. Macartney, who put forward his claim quite seriously. Lord Tennyson was then the Laureate, and Mr Macartney earnestly submitted to the critics the question whether as a new poet of the first order he

[1] A copious producer of poems was asked whether he found them profitable. "They enable me to keep the wolf from the door," was the doubtful reply, to which came the inevitable rejoinder, "Do you mean that you read them to him?" I suppose this must be a "chestnut" dating from classical times, for when Horace boasted in his Ode that his recitation of the charms of Lalage had made the Sabine wolf flee from him when he had no weapon but his verse, some of his friends must surely have chaffed him as to its repellent effect.

had established a right to the succession; and he was willing to let their judgment be based on this one volume. Its chief piece was devoted to the story of the march and fight at Tel-el-Kebir, and the author, who ought to know, declared that "no poem of equal length so perfect in metre had ever been issued from the press in this or perhaps in any other country." It is certainly astonishing that he should, as he complained, have had to spend his own money in bringing out this masterpiece, and that such an expert as Mr Murray, instead of eagerly seizing the opportunity, declared that he had long given up the publication of poetry, as he could not make it pay. This, as Mr Macartney observed, was a sad proof of the decadence of the age; but still "the present deplorable state into which modern poetic influence has sunk must be ascribed more to the poet than to the public." His aim had been to keep in touch with the time, but he could "no more refrain from singing than a skylark can withhold his song." When we turn to the spontaneous outpourings of his soul in his "Tel-el-Kebir," it is impossible to help being struck with his ingenuity in surmounting the difficulty imposed on him by the nomenclature of regiments. Unquestionably the "Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry," and the "Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders," are titles which he is right in saying that "all the poets from Homer to Tennyson could not work into iambics," and probably Homer would have been particularly puzzled. Perhaps the best way of giving an idea of this poem will be to quote a few of its stanzas. At first there is a picture of the bivouac when the moon is clouded, or as he poetically puts it—

"The chaste Diana wears the robe
Of modesty again,
And cannot gaze upon the sleep
Of forty thousand men."

Then we have a catalogue of the regiments and their leaders in the silent night-march over the desert, and it is explained how difficult it is "formation to maintain,"—

"But by connecting files between
Battalions and brigades,
And 'twixt the first and second lines,
The difficulty fades."

Next there is a vivid picture of the surprise and the fight, in those

"Entrenchments dyed blood-red,
Where work is done like terriers
In rat-pits strewn with dead."

Then comes the rout, when the cavalry are "like blood-hounds bounding free"—

"From the confining leash they fly
Upon their flying prey,
Whose rear is harassed by the fire
Of batteries R.A."

It must not be thought, however, because Mr Macartney introduces picturesque images of rats and terriers and Dianas and bloodhounds, that therefore he is wanting in precision. In fact, precision is his strong point. For instance, in his "Battle of Isandula," we are told that "On, on they pressed, till eleven o'clock, And after a rapid tramp, The camp is reached where the *mot* is still The same 'Defend the camp.'" The exact time, we observe, is given, and we have also the distance from point to point, the strength of the Zulus and of

the English, and many other similar details. At El Teb the poet's imagination leads him to depict a mother of heroes who is gazing on the scene, and he asks—

> "What does yon thoughtful lady here
> Among an alien race?
> What is the charm which chains her now
> To this unpleasant place?"

It is difficult to refrain from multiplying quotations of this kind, which show how much justice there was in Mr Macartney's claim to a reversion of the Laureateship. Yet after all the honour was conferred on Mr Alfred Austin, who certainly never wrote anything like "Tel-el-Kebir." Readers who have been charmed by the passages already quoted may turn to the book itself for more. It is only necessary to add that to a Major Shanks was due the first recognition of Mr Macartney's poetical talent. He might well regard that officer (to whom he addressed a sort of prose poem) as "the embodiment of many of the noblest characteristics of humanity" as well as "the personification of chivalry." With the modesty which marks true genius, Mr Macartney refrained from characterising him as also the best judge of poetry of this or any other age.

Possibly this author may have been somewhat lacking in a sense of humour—a deficiency rather common among minor poets. One of them, for example, in verses which he himself classed as "serious," and which were obviously intended to be pathetic, described how

> "The man walked on, though worn and sad,
> Then fell into a hole;
> But e'er he fell, an angel had
> Just time to catch his soul."

Another wrote a tear-drawing poem called the "Widower's Regret," in which we were told that

> "She has passed away quite,
> And has taken her flight."

Again, in some verses on the Prince of Wales's illness, this example of bathos appeared—

> "Day after day the saddening message came
> 'He is not better, he is much the same.'"

Another rhymester tried to curdle our blood with the title "Murder will Out," in which was the stanza—

> "Each chattering daw prates what he saw,
> No tree will hush, no herbage shields,
> Wild creatures sniff the tell-tale whiff,
> No pond, no stream concealment yields."

That "tell-tale whiff" could scarcely be improved upon as an example of what to avoid in serious poetry. Now and then I observed the very limited range of some of these versifiers in the matter of similes. One, for instance, compared his heroine's breast to snow with the most persistent iteration, till he really made the reader reflect that a lady with glacial characteristics of this kind would certainly freeze the passion of her admirers in this climate, although no doubt the lowness of her temperature would be invaluable in Central Africa. Other minor poets thought it necessary always to write in a minor key; indeed one of these lugubrious gentlemen invited sympathy with his "Dismal woe Which always seems to come and never seems to go."

Then there were the philosophers who turned bad metaphysics into indifferent verse, and in the operation produced such lines as "Who would but cannot what

he would should will"—which reads like a puzzling sort of study in auxiliary verbs. Other versifiers had evidently ears which, whatever their size, were faulty in their appreciation of sound; and one not only wrote, but actually printed and published, a composition of some nine or ten thousand lines without having discovered that "place" does not rhyme with "taste," "groves" with "throes," "position" with "procession," "sprang" with "man," nor "ebb" with "bed." Such bards might plead that Gray pairs off "men" with "pain," Elizabeth Barrett Browning "human" with "coming," and Tennyson not only "tendons" with "attendance," but "strike" with "oblique." In fact there is no rhyme so bad as not to be justified by illustrious authority; and the obvious answer to the minor poet's complaint of hypercriticism is that when he shows the genius of his predecessors he shall be pardoned if he also exhibits some of their defects. Many of them, on the other hand, adopted the device of using wholly inappropriate words merely for the sake of rhyme: thus one poetaster described all sorts of things, including "sunbeams," "wildernesses," and "faces," as "furled"—obviously in order that they might pair off with "world"; and examples of this sort might be given by the score.

As to rhythm the limpings and haltings were wonderful, and I occasionally adopted the plan of printing a specimen without division into lines, so that the reader might solve the problem of parcelling it out. Here is an example—"Eyes that the face make soul of, deeply born unto life in the great control of the fashioning power inworn. Solemn influences of the soul, that fall as the wish entrances of something beyond control. . . . Words fail; but about and around them something here would flash out mighty beyond them and win and

be crowned clear, so that the soul should leap through the portal of the sense as dowered with a breath immortal and a full omnipotence of power to be loved and loving more and more, steady in absolute roving beyond time's changing shore." And this puzzle appeared in a book which in typography and binding was quite charming, and which would have been altogether delightful but for its "poetry."

Though I came across scores of absurdities of this kind, a few obscure verse-makers appeared to have at least a breath of the divine afflatus. One of these was R. F. Murray, who having become thoroughly disheartened by successive rejections of his poetry, took to hack-writing of the dreariest kind, and died while yet a young man, crushed by the combined weight of poverty and shattered health. He was certainly a poet, if an unappreciated one. While some of his parodies might have been written by Calverley, his serious pieces are full of deep feeling, and bear traces of the undefinable something which means genius. Take, for example, the tender and pathetic "House of Sleep," dealing with a subject which must always possess an intense human interest, the association of the Here with the Hereafter—

"With eyes fast shut in sunless chambers lying
With folded hands unmoved upon the breast,
Beyond the noise of sorrow and of crying,
Beyond the dread of dreaming, shall we rest?
Shall there be yearning for the sound of voices,
The sight of faces and the touch of hands,
The will that works, the spirit that rejoices,
The heart that feels, the mind that understands?"

Again, there is especial pathos in the following lines, when one considers that the last two years of Murray's

life were a constant struggle against the attacks of a deadly disease—

"When I was young and well and glad
I used to play at being sad,
Now youth and health are fled away
At being glad I sometimes play."

His versatility is shown in his 'Imitations of Wordsworth,' among which is this delightful parody, the subject being a football match—

"He brought a team from Inversnaid
To play our Third Fifteen,
A man whom none of us had played
And very few had seen.

He weighed not less than fifteen stone,
And to a practised eye
He seemed as little fit to run
As he was fit to fly.

He looked so clumsy and so slow,
And made so little fuss,
But he got in behind—and oh
The difference to us."

The career of William Leighton, whose poems have gained some posthumous popularity, was in some respects like that of Murray. Very touching are the verses in which he anticipated the abrupt termination of his short spell of life—

"And now the night stole on me like a thief
While yet I dreamt that it was scarcely noon,
Sad that the sunshine is so very brief,
Sad that the shadows fall so very soon."

He was only twenty-nine when, during his last illness, he pencilled a piece entitled "At Death's Door," containing the lines—

> "So be it. I can calmly welcome now
> The slow up-creeping of the solemn waves
> That come to wash me from the bank of Time."

I do not refer here to the better-known writers of serious verse during the last twenty years, such as Rudyard Kipling, Stephen Philips, Lewis Morris, R. L. Stevenson, Lord de Tabley, A. C. Benson, and E. Nesbit, nor to such delightful humourists as Owen Seaman, A. Godley, A. K. Stephen, and Mrs Stetson (more famous in the United States than on this side of the Atlantic), who cheered my journeys, and now and then caused me to astonish my fellow-travellers with bursts of irresistible laughter.

Of my reviews of prose works I need say little. Perhaps, however, I may recall my satisfaction in demolishing some of the facts and fancies of Mr Harry de Windt's 'Siberia as it is,' which with its preface by Madam Olga Novikoff ("O.K.") was put forward in order to assure the public of the supreme excellence of everything and everybody Russian, and to prove that philanthropy "permeates all their work including the prisons." It will be remembered that Mr Kennan, an American author, had given detailed and specific accounts of the shocking fashion in which thousands of men and women had been exiled to Siberia, many of them without any form of trial, had been subjected to the most revolting torture, and had died by the hundred in dungeons which were hotbeds of typhus and other diseases. Mr de Windt had made it his task to refute these libels. Indolent reviewers had generally taken the line of saying that one story is good till another is told; that probably reforms had taken place; and that Mr de Windt might be right in considering that on the

whole the lot of a Siberian exile was far better than that of an English convict. But having for my sins had considerable experience in the analysis of statistics, I was able to point out that Mr de Windt had himself given damnatory and conclusive proof of the murderous results of the prison-system as administered by the Russian authorities. The figures with which he had been supplied showed that in the three chief prisons the total number of prisoners during the year was just short of seventy-three thousand, and among this number over a thousand deaths had occurred. And Mr de Windt represented this mortality as particularly small. Quite so, said the careless critic; how few towns there are with a population of seventy thousand and yet having only a thousand deaths per annum! But it appeared on examination that the deaths had been compared, not with the daily average of prisoners, but with the entire number who passed through, even if their detention had lasted only a single day. The daily average had not been seventy-three thousand, but less than five thousand, and so we arrive at the astounding result that the death rate was really over two hundred per thousand, as against eight per thousand in English prisons. And these are the figures which afford a convincing proof of the "perfect sanitary arrangements" of the Siberian gaols! Or, as I asked in a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, do they prove that Mr Kennan was fully justified, that Mr de Windt had been thoroughly bamboozled, and that a short term of confinement in a Russian prison was equivalent to a sentence of death?

I cannot resist mentioning one remarkable work which came into my hands, and which was intended to promote the study and extend the use of the Welsh

language. The author had some original views. He inveighed for instance against what he considered the Popish habit of speaking of "Saint" David's, "Saint" Asaph, and so on, and he therefore "either dropped the usual prefix of 'Saint,' or put it in quotation marks." He did not explain, by the way, how he managed to carry out this practice in conversation. If he talked of "going to David's" nobody would know what he meant; and if, whenever he mentioned "St David's," he paused to explain to his hearers that they must regard the "Saint" as being in inverted commas, the flow of his remarks would evidently be interrupted. He would not even speak of the Government Inspector of Schools as "H.M. Inspector," for to do so "involves acquiescence in the term His or Her Majesty applied to a frail mortal creature." He assured the public that if they would only devote twenty years or so to the study of Welsh they might be repaid by making acquaintance with the works of a station-master on the Mid Wales Railway, who "is considered the chief lyric poet of modern times"; of another writer, with a name full of consonants, whose *chef-d'œuvre* is "a masterly performance of equal merit with 'Paradise Lost'"; of yet another unpronounceable gentleman who "has dazzled men by his genius and the lofty flights of his imagination"; and of many other native poets worthy of the world's Valhalla. Yet it is sad to learn that Welshmen, unlike M. Jourdain, although they write poetry almost without knowing it, cannot write prose. The author sorrowfully confesses that "in the department of prose, though the publications are numerous, the number of leading names is but small." Still, Welsh possesses a certain rhythm which has the advantage of being "entirely different from that of English," and "the effect is very pleasing."

After all this, it is sad to learn that the author despairs of the vitality of his native tongue. It, or something like it, has indeed died out in Cornwall, and, in spite of Mr Lloyd George and the new University, a future age may come in which no Welshman will be found able to speak Welsh.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT—POOR LAW ADMINISTRATION—THE DOINGS OF A TIGER—ABUSE AND GRATITUDE—STORIES OF BOARD MEETINGS.

THE district of which I took charge towards the end of 1896 was very large. Its length, from the outskirts of Bristol to the Land's End, was over two hundred miles, and (except Bath and one or two adjacent Unions) it covered the entire counties of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, with an aggregate population of over a million and a quarter. It was highly pauperised, partly owing to the fact that it contained a far greater proportion of old folk than most other parts of England, having indeed more than double as many as the manufacturing districts.[1] Besides, it happened that no means had previously been taken to let the Guardians know the badness of their administration or the extent of the pauperism, so in some respects I had fresh soil to cultivate. When I issued circulars to them on the subject, and urged them in my addresses at their meetings to give larger allowances to the decent poor, and no-

[1] Of persons over sixty-five at the census, the South-Western District had no less than 73 per thousand of population, while the corresponding figure in Lancashire was only 33. But it is common here to find old folk hale and hearty at an age when, in other parts of the country, they are long past work.

thing at all to the drunkards and loafers, I found them at first both surprised and irritated.[1] They desired, a good many of them said, to be generous; and this meant that they were in the habit of dealing out wretchedly small doles all round without making inconvenient inquiries.

Not only did the ratepayers suffer, but thrift, self-reliance, and the sense of family duty were especially discouraged. I have heard a Guardian assert without contradiction at the meeting of his Board, that its members were sent there to help their relations and friends, and that if they did not do so they would not be returned again. Pledges in favour of out-relief were often exacted from candidates for the office of Guardian by voters whose relatives were applicants, and who would feel bound to maintain them if the workhouse were the only alternative. I have known cases in which old folk received allowances from a Board of which their sons were members.[2] In one or two instances Guardians were paid by subscription for their attendance, on the tacit understanding that they should support this policy. One of them, returning from the Board Meeting, passed a farmer (also a Guardian) who was working hard in a hayfield, and whom he derisively asked for a job. "Take thy ould

[1] At one meeting a Guardian declared, with a wealth of metaphor, that I was appearing everywhere as the stormy petrel of the Poor Law, but I should soon find that the boot was on the other leg. I had some difficulty in picturing myself as a booted bird.

[2] When the late Albert Pell was standing for Parliament, he was heckled by a voter who asked whether he had not brought in a Bill "to make us poor fellows support our parents." "No," was the answer; "that s an older piece of legislation. That is Number Five of the laws which were given to Moses on the Tables of Stone. I tell you what it is, Stephen, my man, all that you carry in your heart of those laws is the stone on which they were written." Henceforward the voter was always known as "Stony-hearted Stephen."

feyther off the rates; that be the best job for thee," was the reply, to which he made no rejoinder. Elsewhere I was present at a meeting when a Guardian, employing two single labourers at full wages, protested against their being called upon to contribute a shilling a-week each towards the support of their father, as the effect must be to drive them out of the parish, where labour was much wanted. They were excused.

In another case of which I heard, a well-to-do son was called upon to contribute to the support of his mother who had been deserted by his father. Although he had been brought up by his parents, he was mean enough to plead that they had not been legally married, and therefore he was not liable; so the old woman became a pauper. But he was punished. The father died abroad, bequeathing considerable property to the mother, who also died soon afterwards, but not before she had time to make a will in which the son who had abandoned her to the workhouse was not even mentioned. I was present at a Guardians' meeting when a widow who had been left in easy circumstances was required to pay a couple of shillings a-week towards the support of her aged mother. She stoutly refused, and threatened that if a Justice's Order was obtained she would exempt herself by remarrying. I fancied that she would find this alternative more expensive than the other. In another instance the father of the landlord of a flourishing inn applied for out-relief, which was granted to him (owing to a strange confusion of ideas) because it would be a disgrace to the son if the father were to be in the workhouse. At Plymouth out-relief was given for more than two years to a woman who was a notorious and noisy drunkard, whose conduct the relieving officer reported as being

complained of by her neighbours, and even after this I had some difficulty in persuading the Guardians to substitute an order for the workhouse. In a rural Union I met with the case of a man with a pension of 11s. 6d. a-week, which he was able to supplement by his own work and that of the family, so that the total earnings amounted to 25s. (or far more than the wages of agricultural labourers in the same village), but who was allowed 4s. 6d. a-week out-relief, because he was such a hard drinker that most of the pension was spent in the public-house as soon as he received it. In more than one instance the ratepayers were called upon to contribute to the maintenance of a man carrying on a thriving business, employing a horse and cart; and I found that out-relief was often granted to keepers of small village shops, who were thus aided in competing with rivals forced to pay rates to maintain them.

In my representations to Boards of Guardians, I never advocated the indiscriminate withholding of out-relief, although I often deprecated its indiscriminate grant. When old people who had lived industrious lives, and whose housing was satisfactory, had become incapable of supporting themselves, I suggested that they should be granted adequate out-relief and not merely the starvation allowance which was common. But if they had spent all their earnings on drink, if they were living in filthy and insanitary hovels, or on the other hand had well-to-do relations, quite able to support them, and willing to do so rather than to let them go into the workhouse, out-relief should be resolutely refused. After all, it is not unreasonable that if persons, on the ground that they are destitute, claim to be maintained by the public, they should be

required to prove their destitution by their willingness to enter an establishment where they will be well lodged, warmed, and fed; will have only to do such work as suits their capacity, and will receive in the case of illness, not only medical attendance, but careful nursing and suitable diet, such as could not be supplied to them in their own homes. I did not urge the reforms mainly for the sake of economy, although some thrifty but poor ratepayers might reasonably feel it a hardship to have to support people brought to ruin by self-indulgence. Much more important than the question of burdening the rates is that of pauperising the population, discouraging saving, and promoting recklessness of living. And it was on this ground that I pressed for more thorough investigation, and the adoption of such special rules of administration as had elsewhere been found effective. I also pointed out that if they gave to everybody who applied they could not afford to relieve adequately those who really ought to be helped.

One of my earliest experiences of the result of preaching sermons of this kind was a formal vote of censure passed upon me by the Board of Guardians of a most thriving Union, having a very high rate of pauperism. In representing the necessity of making thorough inquiry into the circumstances of every applicant for relief from the rates, I had said that they ought to remember that if people found they could get money merely for the asking, they would not take much trouble to earn it, and I jocularly added that the charm of living on the public was like "the first taste of blood to a tiger." This obvious truism was, according to the newspaper reports, greeted with "laughter and applause." But it afterwards brought

down a shower of abuse on my devoted head. For some time I found that tiger ubiquitous. He pounced on me from the most unexpected quarters, and every local journal was a den for him. Although not the least exception was taken at the time, a few weeks later a resolution was passed by the Board of Guardians condemning my "brutal and barbarous expression," and, with what Mrs Malaprop called a nice derangement of epitaphs, I was declared to be "un-Christian, inhuman, brutish, and un-English," while one of the members complained that I had "made his blood boil," although this phenomenon had not induced him to protest when he heard my words. Was it not shocking, the Guardians said, that their honest and industrious poor should be called "tigers" by this official? Finally, *Truth*, having apparently got hold of some absurdly incorrect newspaper report, asserted that my one desire was to force the decent and respectable poor into the workhouse, and to break up happy, if humble, homes; while it even suggested that if a girl in an advanced stage of consumption were living comfortably with her mother by the aid of an allowance from the Guardians, I should advocate her being obliged to choose between the workhouse and starvation![1]

At the first opportunity I paid another visit to the Board in question, and began by telling them that I would not withdraw a single word of the speech which was the subject of their vote of censure. But I explained that I had not, as was asserted, stigmatised their poor as tigers any more than I should have called them schoolboys if I had observed that the charm of the first receipt of unearned money was like the first

[1] *Truth* afterwards made an *amende honorable* by explicitly praising the policy of administration which I advocated.

taste of jam to a schoolboy, who did not care for plain fare afterwards. Then I proceeded to criticise their administration much more strongly than before, and pointed out that if they amended it on the same lines as that of a neighbouring Union, they would without hardship to anybody have several hundred fewer paupers, and would save some £3000 a-year, with great advantage to the wellbeing of the community. After a discussion, in which the mover and seconder of the censure took part in a sheepish fashion, the Guardians unanimously passed a vote of thanks to me, which may be regarded as having cancelled their previous resolution, and thus finally disposed of the wild beast which had caused such excitement and had been shot at from so many quarters.

With another Board of Guardians I also had a curious experience. Their staff of relieving officers was obviously insufficient, so I urged them to increase it; and pointed out that the officers themselves had admitted the impossibility of all cases being properly investigated under the then existing arrangements. The discussions on the subject were quite good-humoured, except on the part of one Guardian to whom a Government Inspector was as a red rag to a bull, and who garnished his attacks with many of those strong adjectives which are generally employed to support the weakest arguments. More than once the chairman apologised to me for this violence, which I assured him truly that I regarded as amusingly breaking the monotony of merely business-like proceedings. But I could not prevail; and eventually I was obliged to ask my Department to threaten to issue a compulsory Order. The Guardians were furious, and invoked the aid of their representative in the House of Commons;

but Mr Walter Long supported me, and they had to yield, after passing an indignant resolution protesting against the tyranny of Whitehall. Some eight or nine months after the extra officer had been appointed I went down again, and was able to show them that (as I had predicted) they had saved his salary several times over, had reduced their pauperism without any grumbling (except on the part of a few loafers, who complained that they were obliged to work), and were now in a position to inquire into the circumstances of applicants for relief. Whereupon they unanimously passed a vote of thanks to me. When the resolution was being put, all eyes were directed to the adjectival gentleman who had never missed an opportunity for an attack, but he magnanimously declared, "I won't put in my little drop of vinegar." So I was spared the rod in pickle.

At a good many of the Boards difficulties were caused by members who, from eccentricity or love of notoriety, or perhaps a temporary strike against teetotal principles, would defy the chairman and so stop the proceedings. On rare occasions it had been thought necessary to adjourn the meeting in consequence, but when I was consulted on the subject I advised that the course of public business and the convenience of all the other members ought not to be sacrificed to one disorderly individual, and I referred to cases in which the Courts of Law had held that every deliberative body is entitled to protect itself in its deliberations; and, if they are materially obstructed by any person present, is justified in requiring him to leave the meeting, and if necessary in using force (either through its own officers or through a policeman) to turn him out.

I saw, or rather heard, one novel piece of tactics introduced by a Guardian, who by the way was by no means an uneducated man, but had in the dim past taken the highest honours at Oxford. Over some rather heated question he had assailed one of his opponents with quite extraordinary and scathing virulence, and when his victim rose to reply he not only forthwith went to sleep but snored like a foghorn. The Board was small, so was the room, and those tremendous blasts overpowered everything. How apply argument to a man who was blowing his own trumpet in this fashion? On another occasion, when I happened to be addressing this Board, the same gentleman, in the middle of my speech, began a conversation with a neighbour in a sort of stentorian whisper. I stopped and said, "I hope I am not interrupting Mr B." On which, taken aback, he hastily ejaculated, "Not at all, not at all!" The Guardians laughed heartily; and in the subsequent discussion each began his speech with the words, "If I am not interrupting Mr B."

This was a Cornish Board, possessing a sense of humour which was not universal among the Saxons on the eastern side of the Tamar. Here it happened that one of the workhouse boys had committed some offence for which he had received a thrashing from the Master. There was no question of its being excessive in its severity or of its having been misdirected to such delicate organs as the ear or the hand, which now and then receive serious injury from silly schoolmasters. But one Guardian was shocked at the idea of any sort of corporal punishment. "You will never get intelligence, you will never get instruction, you will never get smartness, from the cane," he said; and he appealed to me for my opinion. Mindful of Huxley's

dictum that "the world is neither wise nor just, but it makes up for its folly and injustice by being damnably sentimental," I did not choose to enter into a discussion on the subject, so I attempted to turn it off by saying that I thought at any rate the cane would make a boy smart. But the speaker did not think it would, and nobody saw my poor little jest,[1] which quite failed to avert a wrangle on the ethics of punishment.

Now and then the rural Guardians were puzzled by the grandiloquent language of official communications. When it was necessary in connection with the workhouse dietary to say how a pie should be made, and those monosyllables were translated into the phrase "the formula of the pie is subjoined," some of them were perplexed by "formula," a word which they mistook for a new food-fad. And when the question was one of rewarding a local official for particular work, it was suggested that in certain eventualities an honorarium might be granted. But this aroused opposition. "What," said a member of the Board, "is the use of giving him an honorarium? If he had one he could not play on it. I am for giving him hard cash." I came across an instance in which a Guardian, declaring that a particular applicant for relief had nothing the matter with him, demanded to have the medical certificate read. This confirmed his suspicion that the case was one of malingering, for it specified the cause

[1] The cold water unconsciously thrown upon me recalls a story of Sir Francis Doyle, who complained that now and then he met with people absolutely incapable of understanding a joke. He was dining at the Duke of Devonshire's when the conversation turned upon the oddity of American names. "Fancy the absurdity of such a name as 'Birdseye,'" remarked somebody. "'Birdseye,'" said Doyle, "is surely as good as 'Cavendish' any day." Not a creature smiled. Doyle declared that all the Cavendishes present thought he had meant to insult them.

of incapacity as "phlebitis," and he proceeded gravely to contend that a man whom the doctor declared to be only suffering from "flea-bites" ought to be able to earn his own living. I was also present when a sturdy loafer, who had repeatedly applied for relief on the ground of his inability to work, but had not previously been able to induce a doctor to support his plea, at last came triumphant with a medical certificate. It was found to testify to his being afflicted with "chronic inertia," and he was much disappointed at having his application again rejected. At another of my Boards somebody referred to a certain condition as a *sine quâ non*—a speaker who followed disputed the existence of any "sign of Queen Anne," and quite seriously urged that Queen Anne had nothing to do with the matter.

One great fault of Guardians seemed to me to be that so few took trouble to gain any experience outside their own Unions. It constantly happened that one Board was quite surprised at learning that its next neighbour had only half as much pauperism as itself, and yet had poor who fared much better. Poor Law literature was generally a sealed book, and most of them were averse from adopting any rules of administration and preferred "to deal with every case on its merits," or, in other words, according to the impulse of the moment or the importunity of the applicant. They liked pleasantly to tickle their consciences with a sense of being generous (with the ratepayers' money) unfettered by principle. They adopted this method, or absence of method, with the best motives; but, as Greg has said, human tenderness is a sad disturber of human intelligence, and certainly a good deal of the energy of the wise has to be devoted to counteracting the efforts of the well-meaning. Still in time the

Guardians learnt something and began to mend their ways.

Much of the progress in this respect was due to the revival of the Poor Law Conferences, which had not been held for ten years before 1897, but have since taken place annually at different centres in the West, under the very capable Chairmanship of Sir Thomas Acland. Attended by delegates from all parts of the five South-Western counties, these Conferences have exercised a stimulating influence, not merely by the papers read and the formal discussions, but by the interchange of ideas among Guardians occupied in carrying out the same kind of work, and anxious to avail themselves of each others' experience. The local newspapers, too, have strenuously advocated administrative reforms, and in more than one case it was only their vigorous support which enabled me to persuade the representatives of the ratepayers to undertake highly necessary improvements.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WORKHOUSES — MANSLAUGHTER — THE IMBECILES — A SHREWD LUNATIC — A SYMPATHETIC J.P. — THE CHILDREN — SCATTERED HOMES — BOARDING-OUT — WOMEN GUARDIANS—WORKHOUSE DIETARIES.

I FOUND the workhouses in the South-West inferior to those in the Eastern counties. The arrangements for bathing and washing were often very deficient; the sick were generally lodged in old-fashioned and ill-ventilated wards, without the appliances which modern practice requires; the children lived too much in a pauper atmosphere, and the imbeciles were a nuisance to the sane.

A tragic occurrence in the Kingsbridge Workhouse, just after I had taken charge of the District, at the end of 1896, had the effect of directing public attention to the last-named question. An old man called Rawle, detained under a certificate that "it was not necessary for the convenience of the lunatic or of the other inmates that he should be kept separate" (this being one of the alternative forms under the Lunacy Act), had been placed in the old men's dormitory, and for about a fortnight gave no trouble. Afterwards, his mania led him to wander about the room at night, sometimes trying to get into the beds of other men, or

to pull the clothes off. They made no complaint to the Master, but on going his rounds one morning he discovered Rawle in bed bleeding and unconscious. The Medical Officer was sent for, and found that while the unfortunate man's body bore marks of his having been severely beaten, there were several wounds on his head, one apparently inflicted by a hobnailed boot, and the result was that he died a fortnight afterwards. A coroner's inquest was held, and the jury returned an open verdict, attaching to it however one of those idiotic riders which seem inseparable from "'quest law," and which solemnly warned the Guardians against the dangers of bedsteads with corners to them, as if any bedsteads were ever made without corners, and as if these particular corners had in some quite unintelligible fashion been concerned in the catastrophe. The police took before the magistrates three inmates of the ward who owned that they had struck Rawle. Two of these were committed to the Assizes, but there was practically no evidence against them except their own admissions, and nothing precisely to show the origin of the particular injuries which caused death. They were accordingly acquitted. Probably three or four men had combined with the intention of giving Rawle such a beating as would deter him from annoying his room-fellows in the way already described; and although this beating was administered with shocking brutality, the blows on the head were very likely inflicted by accident in the darkness. No alarm was given, because nearly all the persons not concerned in the affray were so infirm that they could scarcely be expected, especially in the dark, to make their way to the bell by which the Master might have been summoned.

After making full investigation I came to the con-

clusion that the fact that Rawle's special mania had not been made known either to the Master or the Medical Officer precluded me from attaching blame to them, but it was obvious that more effective supervision was required, and I persuaded the Guardians to separate the imbeciles and appoint an officer to supervise them.

This case gave rise to a movement both in Devon and in Cornwall in favour of the entire separation of imbeciles from sane inmates, and it was suggested that large Unions should have special departments of their own, while small ones should combine for the purpose. The Local Government Board expressed their willingness to facilitate any satisfactory scheme that might be devised, but nothing came of it, and I regret to say that in all but about half a dozen of the western Unions the sane and the insane still continue to be mixed up indiscriminately. It is often said that imbeciles live happily in workhouses, and that they are miserable if shut up in an asylum. Even if this were true I should still doubt whether it is fair on decent old folk to have to spend the latter days of their life in association with idiots, many of whom are personally offensive in their habits; some are mischievous, others make day and night hideous with their howls. Surely regard should be had to the comfort of the ordinary inmates, at least as much as to that of the imbeciles. But I know of no reason why imbeciles should not be just as happy in a suitable institution—where they might be properly classified, and where those susceptible of improvement might be appropriately treated — as in a workhouse where nothing can be done in the way of training them, and where it is sometimes difficult to prevent their being bullied by other inmates.

The Lunacy Commissioners have some duties of

inspection, but I have not been impressed by the value of their supervision. A visit taking place only once in two or three years, and of short duration, is really of very little use; and I do not remember any instances in which the removal to an asylum of a particular imbecile has been recommended on the ground of annoyance to the sane. Their stock suggestion seems to be that of additional exits for escape in case of fire, and I have known this to be made with regard to a dormitory on the ground-floor, where if the door were blocked there would be no difficulty in getting out through one of the windows. I have also known a case in which a Commissioner has proposed that the only male imbecile should have his life cheered by pictures on the walls, though it happened that the man was totally blind.

It seems to me that Poor Law reform is more necessary in this particular than in any other, and I feel a sort of blank despair at having, time after time, been fruitlessly urging it in my Annual Reports. About a dozen years ago the then Parliamentary Secretary of my Department, hearing that I was at Whitehall, and had taken up the subject, asked me to tell him some of my experiences. But he addressed me as if I were his constituency, and delivered a long and I thought rather unpractical discourse in which he intimated that in the following Session measures would be passed for removing all imbeciles, as well as all children, from workhouses, and that in the meantime alterations in those institutions must be suspended.[1]

[1] This was a decision particularly provoking to me, as I had brought several Boards of Guardians with great difficulty to the point of undertaking to provide Infirmaries which were much needed for their sick, and the work was stopped for several years pending the fresh legislation which never came.

When he paused for breath I ventured to express a doubt whether it would be as easy as he thought to carry immediate legislation for both these objects; and I strongly objected to the policy of stopping immediate improvements on the ground of future possibilities. But he bowed me out, having asked me no questions whatever, though he had rehearsed a speech which I daresay was duly let off elsewhere. The imbeciles are still in the workhouses.

The extraordinary expense incurred by County and Borough Councils for the construction of Lunatic Asylums has doubtless frightened people. One of my colleagues recently gave evidence before a Royal Commission to the effect that in a Sussex Asylum a block of pigstyes had been built at a cost which worked out at fifty pounds a pig, and where different mortuaries for males and females had been proposed—the separation of the sexes after death being apparently the idea of the architect. Various asylums have theatres, tennis-courts, and so on, and the expenditure is so lavish and the burden on the rates so heavy that it is not wonderful if we find some hesitation in providing fresh accommodation for the imbeciles. Lord Rosebery once observed that in public matters economy has no friends, but it may be that we shall before long have a reform in this respect. If so, imbeciles might be housed (not necessarily in new buildings) at a third of the cost of the existing asylums; and the staff of attendants might be reduced to very modest proportions. At present the labour of the insane is often quite insufficiently utilised. A friend of mine who was inspecting an asylum where some building operations were going on noticed a strong hulking fellow who insisted on wheeling his barrow upside down, and the Superintendent

said that he could not be induced to trundle it in any other way. My friend gained the confidence of the man, who advised him, when he came there, to follow his example. "If," he said, "you wheel the barrow the right way up, they will put bricks in it, and then it will be twice as heavy." Surely that man had sufficient shrewdness to make it possible to train him to useful work.

In another Asylum (not in my district) a Visiting Justice was urgently appealed to by a poor fellow who declared that his wife had shut him up in order to amuse herself with his money, and that a few minutes' conversation would show him to be perfectly sane. The Magistrate discussed various topics with him; could discover no trace of insanity; was touched with his piteous story; and declared that everything possible should be done to procure his release. "Swear to me that you will not forget," said the supposed lunatic, and the Magistrate, with tears in his eyes, promised solemnly as he turned to go away. Then he felt a tremendous kick behind which sent him flying along the passage, while he heard a gentle murmur, "That will make you certain to remember me." And it did.

So far as paupers are concerned, it is tolerably plain sailing when they are undoubtedly mad; the difficulty arises with the border cases. In many workhouses there are several, mostly of the female sex, who are habitually sane and whom no doctor or Justice could certify as of unsound mind, but who nevertheless, from time to time, have paroxysms of something very like madness, which temporarily make them nuisances to everybody about them. It is difficult to know what to do with women of this sort, who cannot be compulsorily

detained although they contribute in a large degree to the illegitimacy of the country; and it cannot be doubted that the coupling of the unfit conduces seriously to deterioration of the race. This fact was painfully impressed upon my mind a dozen years ago in a workhouse where I actually saw an imbecile woman with an (illegitimate) imbecile daughter, who had her own (illegitimate) imbecile infant in her arms. And my wife once took some trouble to arrange for an epileptic girl being sent to an Institution for the Feeble-minded; but before the matter was finally settled, the mother came to say that nothing more need be done, as the girl had just been married.

Of the ordinary inmates of workhouses it is difficult to get any intimate knowledge in visits which rarely take place more than two or three times a-year. The Inspector is naturally more or less of a stranger to them, and with the best will in the world finds it hard to gain their confidence. But in the course of time I made acquaintance with a good many, and what struck me most about them was their contentedness. When I chatted with them (away from the officers) they were much more inclined to tell me how kindly they had been treated and what care the Matron or the Nurse took of them, than to utter any grumbles. My wife (whose help in my inspections I found invaluable, and who in many workhouses made friends with women in the sick-wards while I visited the men and looked into the books and the domestic arrangements generally) had just the same experience, and it seemed to us both that, at any rate so far as nine out of ten rural workhouses are concerned, the general disposition of the inmates was to be grateful rather than to growl. Some who were drawing very near death seemed to await it

with perfect resignation and absolute confidence; and of more than one old woman whom I knew, it might be said, in old Fuller's words, that her soul saw a glimpse of happiness through the chinks of her sickness-worn body.

Now and then some of the able-bodied women, most of whom were mothers of illegitimate children, and were certainly the worst class in the workhouse, were apt to give trouble. But I think that even from them the most strenuous complaint that I received was on the part of a deputation who represented that they were required to have a bath at least once a fortnight, which they had never done in their lives before, and they were sure that their health would not stand it. When I told them that it was my own practice to have a bath every morning, and it agreed with me, they were surprised, but not quite satisfied. Two or three women of good birth, who had drunk themselves into the workhouse, were conspicuous in resenting discipline, and gave themselves airs which irritated the officials. One who had figured in many police-courts, and had been discarded by all her relations, professed to be shocked by "language quite unfit for a lady to hear," but I learned that her own style of conversation was frequently that of the ladies of Billingsgate.

I found that the inmates who assumed a specially pious air and interlarded their conversation with religious expressions in the presence of strangers were often of anything but good character. When I asked an apparently strong woman why she did not earn her own living instead of staying in the workhouse, she answered solemnly that she was most anxious to do so, but "God Almighty would not allow it." On my subsequently applying to the Master for an explanation, he

answered, "I think, sir, she ought to have mentioned the Gentleman at the other Extremity, for she could keep herself very well, only she can never make any money without immediately getting drunk." Many inmates of this kind are quite content to work hard within the institution, but have so little moral fibre as to be totally incapable of resisting the attraction of drink if they live outside.

The old men in country workhouses usually seem cheerful, especially when there is enough land to occupy them, and when, as generally happens, the Master takes care to arrange the work so as to employ each man in the sort of duty which suits him best. They read or are read to a good deal in their spare time, and here and there the Brabazon Society have provided, for those incapable of much exertion, simple work of a kind which always seems to interest them. The more occupation they have the less they are inclined to grumble. But among the aged, especially those who had been agricultural labourers, extreme deafness was so general that I had much difficulty in communicating with them. On the whole, however, it seemed to me that they were spending their declining years with fair comfort. Among indoor paupers, as among other folk, the quiet content of the country contrasts with the seething turbulence of the town. In a Metropolitan workhouse complaint was made to one of my colleagues by an old soldier that although he had lost one eye he was classed as able-bodied and was kept in the able-bodied ward. The Inspector promised he would make inquiry, and asked him the number of his ward. He said, "They calls it Number Three, but what with the disorder, the discontent, the rough' orse-play, and the foul language, we calls it the War Office." I do not

think that this sort of grievance would be found in the West.

In one of my workhouse infirmaries I often chatted with an old sailor who had taken part in one of the Arctic expeditions sent out in the middle of last century in search of Sir John Franklin's lost ships. He was always cheery, although racked by rheumatism, and had plenty of tales to tell about his chilly experiences. Now and then, too, an ex-poacher would be found surrounded by a knot of inmates to whom his stories of bamboozled keepers and of captured pheasants were more engrossing than the most thrilling paragraphs in the newspapers. It was, however, in the workhouse of a neighbouring county that one of my colleagues met with a man whose reputation in this line was unequalled, and who had led the police and the keepers many a dance. He was reported to have an extraordinary knack of disappearing just when they thought that they had caught him, and could conceal himself where no cover whatever seemed to exist. His usual fate was to pass a part of the winter in the county gaol; and a few years ago, when luck had favoured him in this respect, he sent a large hamper of game to the Governor with his compliments, regretting that for once he was away, otherwise it would have given him great pleasure to share the Governor's Christmas dinner. He is now eighty-three, and can poach no more. His wife, who was eighty-one, lived only three weeks after the pair were admitted to the workhouse. When she was almost at her end, the kindly Matron asked her if there was anything she fancied. She answered, "Yes, I think I could manage a slice of young pheasant." (It was the middle of August!) The Matron said, "I'm afraid that I can't get that

for you now." She replied, "Oh, I'm sorry for that; you see I'm accustomed to it. I always ate pheasant. We gave the rabbits to the common folk, and kept pheasants for ourselves."

Pauper children are a class whose condition has been enormously improved of late. The old workhouse schools have been steadily diminishing in number, and it is several years since I secured the abolition of the last of those in my District. The extent to which the children in them were brought up in an exclusively pauper atmosphere may be gathered from the fact that in one rather important Union I found that, except to go to church on Sundays, they never went outside the workhouse walls from year's end to year's end. In most places the children go to the village schools, where they make plenty of friends and are generally liked by the teachers, partly because they are far cleaner than the rest, and partly because their attendance is invariably regular, and therefore they do most towards earning the Government grant. But part of each day, most of every Saturday and Sunday, and a good deal of the school holidays, have to be spent in the workhouse. The result is that if the children are kept rigidly apart, under paid officers, they are apt to be cramped by too much discipline. If, on the other hand, they are allowed ample freedom, they are likely to associate with adult inmates whose influence is depraving. If it were not for the question of expense, I should like to see all children removed from workhouses, but while they are lodged there it seems to be essential that they should be in quite separate departments, under the charge of paid officers, and that the adult inmates should not in any degree have the care of them.

The system of Scattered Homes, which answers excellently, is in force in some of the larger Unions; and where the foster-mothers are carefully selected and the children are trained to take a share in the housework, they get self-reliance and a certain knowledge of the world. In accordance with precedent, I at first agreed to an arrangement by which fifteen children were assigned to each house, but experience convinced me that this number was larger than one woman could manage, and it seems to me that ten, or at most a dozen, should be the maximum. These children, also, do capitally at the Public Elementary Schools, where they are not in the least looked down upon either by the teachers or by their schoolfellows. The imperfections[1] of the official statistics make it difficult to frame any exact estimate as to the relative cost of a child lodged in the workhouse and one in a Scattered Home. Probably the latter is rather more expensive, but need not be much more so.

Boarding-out is perhaps the cheapest plan and also the best for effacing all taint of pauperism, but ex-

[1] I suppose that some day it will be found practicable to devise accounts in which the salaries of indoor officials shall be distinguished from those of Relieving Officers and the like, and the expenditure on workhouse buildings from that on other Poor Law institutions. It ought to be possible, too, to do away with the present anomaly by which a married labourer, with say seven children, is counted as nine paupers if he obtains an order for the attendance of the parish doctor upon himself, although the only relief supplied may consist of a bottle of cough mixture, or even an intimation that no medicine is necessary. The result of the present rules is that they are obeyed in some of the best administered Unions, and evaded in some of the worst. So the latter are apt to figure in an unduly favourable light. I fancy that a few experts, including a representative of the Royal Statistical Society, a political economist who knows what he has wanted and has failed to get, and a really able Clerk to Guardians, would be able to suggest some important improvements in our Poor Law statistics. The admirable system of the Registrar-General, with its careful verification of local figures, might afford some useful hints.

perience has shown that abuses can only be prevented by an amount of supervision not easy to secure. Besides, this system is limited to orphans and deserted children, whereas most of those for whom the Guardians are responsible are the illegitimate offspring of mothers still living. Even if its extension to this class were on other accounts desirable, there would be obvious objections to placing such children with cottagers' families in their own Union, since it would be impossible entirely to cut off their mothers from interfering. The system is utilised to a certain extent in the District, but nearly all the Unions which have adopted it have preferred to retain the children within their own area rather than to entrust them to Committees elsewhere. It seems to me to be very important that all boarded-out cases should be placed under the charge of ladies paying very close and thorough attention to their duties. The people who receive such children are not philanthropists, but take them for the profit to be earned; and the worse the treatment in the matter of food, dress, and so on, the more profit is made. Human nature being what it is, means to counteract this tendency are indispensable.

In the West of England there are only about fifty women among more than two thousand Guardians, so there is evidently something unfavourable in the social climate to this particular flower of administration. Yet the value of woman's work can scarcely be overestimated, especially as regards the children and the sick. For girls brought up in the workhouse it is of the greatest importance not only that they should have somebody to see that they get proper training, but that they should in their general friend-

lessness have someone who will look into their grievances and sympathise with their troubles, will spare no pains in getting them suitable places, and will continue to take an interest in them when they go out into the world. Ladies may also give a helping hand to the unfortunate young women who come to the workhouse for childbirth, and who, though not as yet beyond reclamation, are likely to sink to the lowest depths for want of friendly aid. The workhouse officers, again, often much isolated, heartily welcome tactful visitors, who show them little attentions, enter sympathetically into their difficulties, and cheer them in their monotonous duties. Besides, in the ordinary business there are many matters about which it is desirable to know the woman's point of view; to say nothing of the fact that female Guardians exercise a salutary influence on the tone of the proceedings of their Boards.

Of course if, as sometimes happens, a woman gets elected from motives of personal vanity, if she is gushing, impulsive, without much ballast, and with no care to instruct herself in the principles and practice of administration, she may give a great deal more trouble than a man. A man generally has his own profession or business, and can devote a comparatively small time to his public duties; but ladies often have infinite leisure, which, when judiciously employed, is valuable, but when misapplied may do much harm. Now and then you find a most well-meaning person who has so pampered her conscience as to suffer from ethical indigestion. The wrong sort of woman has sometimes a terrible capacity for adding acrimony to debate by inflicting pin-pricks at the precise psychological moment when they are most irritating. For-

tunately, however, this type of female Guardian is almost unknown in the West of England, where I am glad to say the ladies on the different Boards do admirable work. I used to wish that their number were at least quadrupled.

A dozen years ago the system of workhouse dietaries was exceedingly cumbrous. Each Union fed the inmates according to prescribed tables, all of which had been approved by the Central Department, but on no general principle that was discoverable. Yet the least deviation had to be reported by the auditor to Whitehall, and was often followed by much correspondence, the chief object of which seemed to be to furnish material for derisive paragraphs in newspapers. At last, however, it dawned upon the official mind that nothing was gained by wrangles over the quantity of currants in a pudding, and in 1900 a General Order established a new system intended to get rid of such futilities. Oddly enough, it aroused opposition in many parts of the country, mainly because neither the Guardians nor their officers took any pains to understand it. Indeed they even resented it, owing to a strange confusion of ideas, as being a centralising measure. I made it my business to explain to them that it was just the reverse, and that one of its chief objects was to allow them, within a wide range, to settle their own workhouse dietaries for themselves instead of having to apply to Whitehall for sanction to every trivial change from beef to pork and from suet-pudding to currant-dumpling. I pointed out that every ration specified was pronounced by expert authority to be ample for the class to which it applied; that the cheapest set of meals, at average prices, need only cost a little over two shillings a-week, whilst the dearest might amount to twice that sum;

that, if they found dinner No. 1 unsuitable to their inmates, they might choose dinner No. 63 or any of the intermediate numbers; that waste would certainly be lessened; and that the advantage of feeding the children according to appetite, instead of giving the same amount to large and to small eaters, was indisputable. The Guardians saw this at once; ceased to grumble at the innovation; and are now all agreed that the new system is in every way better and more economical than the old.

The Order certainly had two good incidental results. It induced many Boards to engage paid cooks, instead of employing chance inmates knowing nothing about the work, and therefore being wasteful as well as incompetent. Moreover, the cooking appliances, which in some places had been of the most rudimentary character, were overhauled and improved. Here is a description which a Visitor gave of the old arrangements in a particular workhouse: "They had two coppers so set that their tops were separated only by a space of three inches. When I was there, they were boiling clothes in one and soup in the other; and there were no lids on them. When the soup boiled over into the clothes, I raised no objection, but when the clothes boiled over into the soup, I said I would not stay to dinner."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CLARET VINEYARDS OF THE GIRONDE—OYSTER-CULTURE OF ARCACHON—VIVISECTION.

THE one drawback of an Inspector's life is that, like a housemaid, he is never off duty. He must hold himself in readiness to go down immediately to any remote part of his District where some sudden difficulty has arisen in a workhouse or with a Board of Guardians, and he has much correspondence with all sorts of people as to all kinds of matters, to say nothing of the official bag, which pursues him daily and occupies his time in discussing the course to be taken as to each communication that reaches Whitehall from any one of the fifty Unions in his District. Even his holidays, if he is in England, are not entirely free from trammels of business, and he finds it a relief to seize the opportunity, whenever possible, of spending them abroad for the sake of a complete change.

On one occasion I paid a remarkably pleasant visit to the wine-growing districts of the Gironde. The first question which puzzled me was: Why is it impossible to produce a first-rate claret in any other country? One would think that among the infinite varieties of soil and of climate on the surface of the globe it would

be easy to find similar conditions elsewhere, yet that one Department, on the left bank of the river, within thirty miles of Bordeaux, with an area much less than that of the county of Devon, contains the only vineyards in the world which yield claret of anything like supreme excellence. The question is not one of special kinds of grapes, or of special cultivation. Vines from the most celebrated stocks have been introduced into various countries where there seemed to be a chance of their thriving, and skilled treatment has been applied with a lavishness of outlay warranted by the fact that a vineyard producing wine like that of Château Margaux or Château Lafite would be a gold mine to its possessor, wherever it might be situated. Australia itself, which has made wonderful progress in vine culture, cannot yet supply anything equal to even a fourth- or fifth-growth of the Gironde, and though some of its so-called Burgundy is rather more like the real thing, even of the best it may be said, in Lovelace's words, that only

> "Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an *Hermitage*."

And it is certain that the want of an indefinable something has prevented the manufacture, outside one little patch of France, of any claret rising above mediocrity.

As usual, I found everybody ready to help me, in a good-natured fashion, to get all the information I wanted; and I was indebted to the British Consul, Mr Walter Hearn, for putting me in communication with the proprietors of some of the most important vineyards, who in their turn took much trouble to give me ample facilities for seeing the vintage and for hearing about all the methods of cultivation adopted.

The growers had just come to the end of a long and

costly struggle,[1] in which they eventually succeeded in vanquishing the phylloxera, but not before it had destroyed at least 800,000 acres of vineyards, most of which had to be uprooted and replanted. It was indeed estimated that the devastations of this wretched little worm cost the country altogether a good deal more than the amount of the indemnity paid to Germany after the war of 1870-1. The plan generally adopted is to plant American vine-stocks, which appear to possess some characteristic objectionable to the fastidious pests, and upon these to graft the French vine, the quality of which is no more affected by the operation than that of Ribston pippins by being grafted on crab-stocks. But the proprietors of some of the most renowned vineyards considered that the sensitive reputation of their growths might suffer if the old stocks were known to be no longer in existence. Therefore many of them adopted an elaborate system of chemical treatment which proved to be efficacious, but was decidedly costly. Sulphuretted carbon is usually employed, and the vines have to undergo several sprinklings during the year. The *bouillie bordelaise* (which is mainly composed of sulphate of copper, and has come into use in England as a preventive of potato disease and also of some of the blight which attacks orchards) has apparently no influence on the phylloxera, but is effective in checking the

[1] When the Government of Victoria proposed to adopt similar measures in the Australian vineyards, some crack-brained teetotallers actually accused them of "helping to defeat God's plan for the abolition of the wine industry by spending money for the eradication of the phylloxera." This notion of Providence being obliged to succumb to the chemists was novel, and suggested that the providential designs must have changed since David sang of the cheering influences of the wine-cup. On the same principle it would be desirable to sweep doctors off the face of the earth for interfering with the intentions of a Higher Power to keep down population by disease.

mildew which is the other chief enemy of the grape. I was told that the discovery of its virtues had been made in an odd way. A public road ran through one of the vineyards near Bordeaux, and the proprietor suffered much from passers-by who ate his grapes, so he asked a chemist if there was any wash which would make them unpalatable and yet would not spoil the wine. A weak solution of sulphate of copper was suggested, and was applied to the vines for twenty or thirty yards on each side of the road. It was found that these strips entirely escaped the mildew which affected all the rest of the vineyard, and hence the *bouillie bordelaise* came generally into use. I saw one vineyard in which a fairly large and perfectly healthy-looking crop had been thus saved, while its neighbour, belonging to an owner who had employed no special treatment, had neither grapes nor leaves.

My first visit was to Messrs J. & A. Barton, who not only offered me every facility for seeing the ingathering upon their own vineyards of the Châteaux Léoville and Langoa, but kindly took me over to the Château Lafite and various other wine-growing estates. In nearly all, the vintagers were at work, and it was curious to see the extreme care with which each bunch of grapes was scrutinised for the detection of unripe or withered berries, all of which had to be discarded; and this operation was carried on with such thoroughness that a cluster of fruit which might have satisfied the Canaanite spies had sometimes dwindled, before it reached the basket, to about a dozen grapes.

At the Léoville vineyard, a fine Château is backed by one of the few pieces of woodland of the Médoc, and crowns a slope of vines and pastures, falling away picturesquely to the great river. One patch is called

"La Prise," from the fact that during the Reign of Terror M. de Pontac, the then proprietor, was condemned to death by a Revolutionary tribunal, and a search party actually found him among his own vintagers, disguised as a labourer from the Pyrenees. They arrested him, but so well did he maintain his character that they declared themselves mistaken, and allowed him to escape. It was at about the same period that an Irish ancestor of Messrs Barton, who was the first to establish the business in Bordeaux, was seized as an *émigré* and sentenced to be guillotined. On the night before his intended execution his wife was allowed to visit him, so, following an illustrious precedent, he changed clothes with her and managed to get off safely, after possessing himself by a dare-devil freak, only conceivable by an Irishman, of the key of the guillotine which was to have been utilised on the morrow; and this key was afterwards presented to the Dublin Museum. It was not till after a good many years that he dared to return to France, but when he did so, expecting to find himself ruined, his manager, M. Guestier, proceeded, in the most matter-of-fact way, to furnish accounts for each year, and to hand over the very considerable balance which had accumulated. It is pleasant to know that direct descendants of the Barton and the Guestier of those troublous times are members of the present Bordeaux firm.

If my remembrance of the Georgics is correct, Virgil's notion of the proper soil for vines was that it should be a porous loam, rich enough to stick to the fingers, without crumbling when handled. This rule would by no means suit the Gironde, where all the best vineyards are on a particularly light and almost sandy gravel, which is certainly neither rich nor sticky. What strikes

the eye most conspicuously is the enormous quantity of stones, big and little, among which the vines seem to struggle for existence. And this is especially the case in the vineyards close to the village of St Julien, such as the Latour, the Lafite, and the Beaucaillou. The last-named Château, indeed, takes its title from this peculiar characteristic of the land, and it was here that, owing to the kindness of the resident owner, M. Johnston, I had special opportunity for studying various kinds of viticulture. That gentleman, who comes of an English family which settled at Bordeaux about a century and a half ago, is now by far the largest grower in the Gironde. He has no less than seven vineyards, of which one, that of Beaucaillou, ranks with the Léovilles as coming immediately after the four first-growths, while another, that of Dauzac, also occupies a place in the official hierarchy of clarets. The Château itself is among the finest in the district, with its imposing towers commanding the river, and its ample and very prettily disposed gardens. Here we see the latest appliances of science, richly paid for by their results, though the necessary expenditure, amounting to between £30 and £40 per acre annually, is beyond the means of most of the small proprietors. In this, as in other industries, men of large capital have an enormous advantage.

On M. Johnston's property a good deal of labour-saving machinery is employed. Steam is utilised for cranes, for presses, for stripping the grapes from their stalks, for transferring the wine from tub to vat, from vat to cask, and so on; while in one vineyard there is a system of tramways by which the grapes are brought on trucks to the presses. This particular property, which is called La Maqueline, had a special interest as

being not only the largest vineyard in the Gironde, but one of the newest. It has over three hundred acres of vines in a compact block, of which only six years before my visit three-fourths was pasture. This was steam ploughed, scientifically laid out, planted with the best French vines grafted on American stocks, huge buildings were erected, an artesian well sunk, and all the latest improvements introduced.

It is here that M. Johnston started the production of a wine which but for the place of its origin would be called an excellent dry champagne. For many years he had forwarded to Épernay huge consignments of his grapes, which were there turned into first-rate champagne, sold at first-rate prices. Then it occurred to him that as the fashion of cigarette-smoking after dinner had caused much falling off in the English demand for claret, he might profitably use some of his grapes in making a *vin mousseux;* and accordingly he studied the methods adopted in the Champagne country, obtained the same machinery for pressing, and imported a colony of workmen familiar with all the processes employed. The quality of champagne, as of claret, depends largely on the care taken in the selection of the grapes and in the rejection of such as are at all unsound. And there is one point that has specially to be regarded, namely, that of colour. Champagne is not, as seems to be generally assumed in England, usually made from the white but from the red grape, and while the juice is straw-coloured, the skin is full of ruby dye. The operation of pressing has therefore to be closely watched. So long as it only expels the juice, the hue is what has been described as that of imprisoned sunbeams; but if the skins are bruised, the result is a ruddy tinge, which is the last thing to be desired. Accordingly, the pressing has to

be arrested at the precise moment when there are signs that the colour is becoming too pronounced; and in this respect perfect success has been obtained at La Maqueline. One difficulty, so far as the English market is concerned, is that of name. Although the grapes are those which, as already stated, have been used in the Épernay district in past years, and the whole process of manufacture is precisely the same as adopted there, the French Government prohibit the sale, under the name of champagne, of any wine not made in that province, and the result is that M. Johnston's product has to be called "Sparkling Médoc." No doubt this to some extent handicaps it in England; but as it is absolutely pure, is as dry as the most fastidious taste can require, and is sold at about two-thirds of the price of the same wine with another name, it is making its way in this country. The Stores supply it; and although not so delicate as Cliquot or Pommery, nor so robust as Pol Roger, it is, to my taste, superior to most of the other brands of champagne which I happen to know. It contains no headaches.

Near Beaucaillou is the Château Gruaud Larose, which, like many other properties in France, has been apportioned among the heirs of a former owner, so that not only is the area under cultivation split up, but even the Château and the wine-barns have been divided by party walls, so that you see windows of which half belong to one resident, half to another. The system produces very inconvenient results. For example, the heirs of the celebrated vineyard of Latour, numbering nearly twenty, were obliged to constitute themselves a limited liability company, for any one of them could have required a division which would have ruined the vineyard, and I was assured that an

excellent property which under peasant proprietorship produced a considerable amount of wine had, by the obstinacy of some of the heirs, been divided and subdivided till one man's share consisted of only three vines.

It is curious that the word "claret," as applicable to red wine, is unknown in France, having indeed no terser equivalent than the generic "vin de Bordeaux," and its origin is by no means certain. It has been supposed to be derived from the word *clair*, but the obvious objection is that it is anything but transparent, —an adjective which would be more fitly applied to Sauterne or Champagne. Here it may be incidentally remarked that in England *grave* is always assumed to be white wine, and even Littré's Dictionary gives "*Grave*, a white wine from the environs of Grave in the Bordeaux country." This, like the familiar definition of "crab," is a curious combination of blunders. In the first place, the *vin de grave* is as often red as white; indeed, one of the four first-growths of claret, viz., Haut Brion, is a *grave*. Secondly, there is no such village as Grave in the Gironde. *Grave* is a special sort of sandy gravel, and the vineyards which produce the wine known by that name extend southwards along the left bank of the Garonne, for about twenty miles from Bordeaux. It is farther up still that we come to the Sauterne district to which I thought it worth while to devote a day or two after my tour among the Médoc vineyards.

The country is very pretty. Instead of being a mere flat expanse, only relieved here and there by a church, a château, a garden, and a plantation, it is decidedly hilly, steep woodsides run down to the river, and fields of luxuriant maize and tobacco vary the landscape, while historical houses with parks and woods crown

the heights. It seems that the United States and Germany are both good customers for Sauterne, but in England the demand is not extensive, and the only well-known kind is the Château Yquem, which indeed stands a head and shoulders above all the rest, and commands very high prices. It often fetches as much as the best claret, and has repeatedly been sold, as soon as made, for 1500fr. the hogshead, a price which has risen, upon the wine being bottled, to the equivalent of about 80s. a dozen.

The vintage was in full operation, and we were able to see the striking differences between making this and the red wine. In the Médoc the whole bunch of grapes is gathered, any berries that are shrivelled or decayed are thrown away, and the rest are forthwith sent to the wine-press. Here the grapes are picked one by one, and the curious fact is that only those which are shrivelled are used. Sauterne is indeed made exclusively of rotten grapes, but the selection requires the greatest care, because the rottenness must be of precisely the right kind. The grape must not be immature or sour, nor above all must it have withered owing to insect attacks, for these impart a detestable bitterness to the juice. The *pourriture*, as it is called, must be due to the heat of the sun, all the better if aided by a few showers during the vintage. The picking is a long operation, often extending over a whole month, since the vines have to be examined over and over again in order to obtain just those grapes which have arrived at perfection. The labour bill for the classed growths is therefore enormous, although all this elaboration of treatment is not carried out with regard to the ordinary wines. The baskets of single grapes are taken to the presses, which squeeze out the juice mechanically.

It is hard to understand how the apparently rotten fruit thus collected can possibly produce the golden fluid, delicate in flavour and rich in bouquet, which some connoisseurs esteem as the most refined wine in existence.

I happen to know that a few years ago there was a Turkish Ambassador at a Continental Court over whom the French Minister was fast acquiring a paramount influence, because he possessed such magnificent Yquem that the Turk could never resist the temptation of dining with him. But the British Ambassador (Lord Dufferin) was much too astute to allow himself to be thus kept at a disadvantage. So at really tremendous expense he obtained some of the same wine from the Château, and thus succeeded in placing matters on an even footing, and in inducing the representative of the Ottoman Porte to discuss politics at the British Embassy under the influence of his favourite tipple.

It might be said that in journeying from Bordeaux to Arcachon you go from the Pays du Raisin to the Pays de la Résine. The sandhills swept up by the furious storms of the Bay of Biscay have been consolidated and kept in place by being systematically covered with firs, and these yield enough resin for all the fiddle-bows in the world. Each tree is tapped by the simple process of cutting a large slit out of its bark and allowing the strong-smelling and sticky fluid slowly to ooze into a saucer below.

The town of Arcachon is prettily placed on the edge of a huge landlocked bay, in which more oysters are bred than anywhere else in the world. As a watering-place it is steadily increasing in popularity, and attracts visitors in winter as well as in summer. It is not

exactly on the sea, since the narrow entrance of the basin is at the bar, some four or five miles off. Nevertheless the Parisians come in shoals, disport themselves in marvellous bathing-dresses, and find endless amusement in boat-sailing, for which the broad sheet of water is unsurpassed, as it is effectually protected against the rollers of the Atlantic. The pine-wood behind the town is occupied by what is called the Winter City, a large cluster of two or three hundred villas which are annually in much demand. It is asserted that the mildness of the climate, the ocean breezes, and the scent of the pines, combine to produce conditions eminently suitable to delicate chests; and in the case of asthma especially,—a malady which perhaps more than any other is capricious as to soil and atmosphere, —the doctors boast that persons who are in misery elsewhere can here live in comfort.

To Bramontier, a distinguished engineer, who devised the extraordinarily successful system of afforesting the sandhills, the prosperity is due. And hereby hangs a tale. When the late Lord Houghton was on a visit to a friend at Arcachon he was informed that a banquet was to be given in honour of Bramontier, whose name he had never previously heard. He was invited to attend, and was lent by his host a book giving some particulars of the worthy's career. At the dinner he was unexpectedly called upon to return thanks to a toast, and this he did in an oration so brilliant, so epigrammatic, and so dramatically descriptive of Bramontier's achievements, that it was universally allowed to be the speech of the evening, and wonder was expressed that an Englishman should display such extraordinary knowledge of the work of a foreign engineer. "He is a poet," was the explana-

tion, "and a poet knows everything and imagines the rest."

What attracted me most, however, was the oyster-breeding. Very pretty was the scene when in the early morning of a brilliant day the sun began to light up the bay with its miles of beds containing the molluscs in every stage of culture. By the courtesy of M. Johnston (an old Etonian though a Frenchman), who is head of the Oyster Administration, I was enabled to make a thorough examination. First, mindful of recent revelations in England, I inquired as to the possibility of the oysters being polluted by sewage, and was promptly reassured by the statement that Arcachon, like most other French provincial towns, did not enjoy the luxury of drainage, and therefore the water could not possibly be contaminated. Never was such a place for this particular culture. Year after year the "spat" is deposited in abundance, and it thrives astonishingly, as the frosts which do so much injury to our Essex beds are almost unknown. Tiles are laid down to which it attaches itself, these having been previously covered with a thin coating of cement so that the young oysters may be separated by the blade of a knife without injury to their tiny shells. When this has been done they are placed in trays of wire-netting, which are deposited in a pool especially prepared for the purpose, and are so arranged that they do not come in contact with the mud. Each pool is fenced round so as to keep off the skate, the star-fish, and the crabs, which are the natural enemies of the oysterlings before their armour is sufficiently hard to protect them. Here they grow rapidly, and in about three years are at their prime for consumption. A large proportion, however, are exported when quite small in

order to attain their full growth on beds in England, Ireland, and even Norway. The annual output at the time of my visit was said to amount to about three hundred million oysters, the ordinary cargo of a steamer being about a million. Some, by the way, are sent to Marennes, near the mouth of the Gironde, where they acquire the green tint prized by Parisian *gourmets* as denoting a certain special refinement of flavour. This effect is produced by a weed with the high-sounding title of *Navicula ostrearia*. The process is simple enough. The oysters are laid down in the Marennes ponds and are covered with brackish water, in which this weed grows luxuriantly. In the course of six or seven weeks their beards (which are really their breathing-gills) are tinged with a dull green pigment; they become fat, and it is in this condition that they are specially sought for by epicures and fetch a high price. It used to be supposed that the discoloration might be due to the presence of copper, but repeated analysis has shown it to be exclusively of vegetable origin.

Besides their depôt at Marennes the Arcachon Administration have a large oyster-park at Pallice la Rochelle, which was originally constructed for the Government to serve as a dock for torpedo boats, but owing to some official plundering or blundering was made so shallow as to be quite useless for that purpose. One of the conditions, by the way, when the dock was contracted for, was that it should always be lighted by electricity, and consequently the oysters, now its sole inhabitants, live in a nightly blaze of light, against which it is perhaps only their dumbness that prevents their protesting. Are oysters very sensitive? We know on the authority of Tilburina that they may be crossed in love, and that fact ought to make us sympa-

thetic towards them. Yet even the Vivisection Society has never taken up the cudgels on their behalf. Might not Mr Stephen Coleridge excite much indignation among the tender-hearted by pointing out that here is a sentient being whom we stab with a knife, then we apply to the wound such irritants as vinegar and pepper, and finally we swallow him whole, careless whether he is alive or dead. In this age of sentimentality ought not an Act to be passed requiring that no oyster should be eaten without the previous administration of an anæsthetic?

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONSUMPTIVES AT DAVOS — FIREWORKS AT FLORENCE CATHEDRAL—THE OCTROI AT BOLOGNA—CANTONAL ASSEMBLY OF APPENZELL.

Cherbuliez says somewhere that everybody has spectacles of his own but is quite ignorant of the exact tint of his glasses; and though all the world travels nowadays, no two men see things precisely alike. This is my excuse for a few words about some of my play-time spent in places sufficiently familiar to the average tourist.

Long ago, perhaps through having my attention much engrossed officially by matters of Public Health, I was interested in the extraordinary change of practice in the treatment of phthisis. It used to be the custom to send the person with a delicate chest to Nice, Cannes, or Madeira. He did not expect to be strengthened by the balmy breezes; he only hoped to escape the positive perils of an English winter. Then came the plan of freezing out the fiend of disease by the air of Davos, at an altitude of over 5000 feet, where the temperature constantly descends below zero. It is true that the place is never bleak, for on no side is it exposed to the wind. Sheltering mountains tower up all round, and afford a complete defence towards the north and east. The treatment is of the hardiest kind, outdoor exercise

is imperative, some of the most delicate people always sleep with their windows open, and they are warned that close rooms are much more dangerous than fresh air, however cold. The effects, in those early days, seemed little less than miraculous, and I repeatedly skated with a Cambridge undergraduate who told me that he had been reduced by hemorrhage to an apparently moribund condition at home; that this particular affection had absolutely ceased; that he had rapidly gained weight; and that like many others in similar circumstances he was thoroughly enjoying life. I made acquaintance, too, with John Addington Symonds, whose existence was probably prolonged by Davos for most of the score of years which he spent there after he had practically been given up in England. I do not know whether there are any statistics which show with precision the actual results of all the cases treated in the last quarter of a century. Such a statement, if full, honest, and uncoloured by prejudice, would be of the utmost value; for I saw enough to convince me that, at any rate for a time, the rigour of a Swiss winter was capable of producing quite extraordinary improvement in the condition of many cases which had been practically given up as hopeless. I should have liked to devote more time to the subject and to apply the cold methods of officialism to the collection of hard facts and statistics. But I confess that the social, not the physical, atmosphere drove me away. I did not mind a temperature which one night fell to fourteen degrees (Fahrenheit) below zero, but I could not stand the depression caused by everybody's talk about his own inside. To be for ever hearing such terms as "cavities," "infiltration," "consolidation," and "hemorrhage" was too melancholy for words, and after about a fortnight I left the Colony

of Consumptives in sadness. I dare say now a more cheerful tone prevails, but I fancy that to people who are not ill and only want to enjoy themselves, St Moritz is a more attractive place for a stay.

One finds a certain advantage in travelling outside the conventional holiday season, and I have generally avoided Easter. But not long ago I arrived in Florence on the eve of Good Friday, and the crowd, consisting mostly of English, was one of the worst I ever encountered. They shouted and struggled like holiday-makers on the Crystal Palace platform when 'Arry is returning from one of his frolics, and were apparently all intent not on seeing things, but on saying that they had seen them. Some of what used to be excellent hotels now lay themselves out to cater for this class, and the result is deplorable. One such hotel, which used to furnish its visitors with the Italian cooking that can be so dainty, now substitutes a bad attempt at English dishes. On Good Friday each plate at breakfast was supplied with a stodgy agglomeration of currants and dough, heavy as lead and cold as stone, marked with two indentations from the baker's knife, and it was imagined that these indigestible horrors would pass as Hot Cross Buns. At *table d'hôte* the *biftek* and the *plom poudaing* were substituted for the "maigre" fare of fish and eggs, *risotto* and *paste asciutte*, which the Italian can prepare to such perfection; and the innkeepers did not realise the fact that we come abroad for a change, not only of scene and language, but of diet, and that an imitation of our heavy dinner at home is no more what we want than the weak coffee and weaker tea which they habitually provide for us.

In this twentieth century, with its fading away of superstitious beliefs, one cannot help marvelling that

the annual pageant in the Cathedral of Florence has survived. What would the Dean say if somebody proposed to let off fireworks in St Paul's and called on Messrs Brock to supply their very best Roman candles and "Devil among the Tailors" for the occasion? The tradition runs back through the ages that the Tuscan Archbishop must liberate a dove on the High Altar at the stroke of noon on Saturday in Holy Week, and that it depends on the direction in which the bird flies whether the harvest will be bad or good. The custom grew into disrepute, possibly because the dove had not a sufficiently accurate gift of prophecy, so the ecclesiastical authorities, to appease the populace, had recourse to a mechanical bird; and in order to secure its flight in the right direction, it was connected by a string with a cart of hay outside, which it set alight with fire from the altar. This simple form of toy gave way in its turn to electricity. A wire was made to run from the altar to the cart, now filled with fireworks, built up in the form of a pagoda, and stationed just outside the great west door. After the inevitable procession of priests and cross-bearers, with the Bishop in the middle, the cannon booms out the stroke of noon and forthwith the dove makes its way down the wire, spluttering out fire like the "mine of serpents" in Messrs Brock's catalogue. This at least is what it ought to do, but when I was present a hitch occurred, and just as the creature came opposite to me in the nave it burst with a premature and rather startling explosion, scattering its fragments among the crowd. Nevertheless the fireworks outside were ignited by the electric wire, and among the general noise and confusion it was supposed that the baleful effect on the harvest would be disregarded. For some time the big piazza in front of the Cathedral resounded

with successive reports and was filled with smoke, while the chattering, laughing, and screaming inside were deafening. And this was a religious rite! Chairs were hired out, and the nave was a mass of humanity regarding the ceremonial with mixed feelings. I heard a fellow-countryman inquiring, "Where is that blessed bird roosting now?" and I also listened to the awed voices of the peasants who still possess their ancient faith in its power of blessing the fruits of the earth. And they are even said to believe that the sacred spark originally carried by the dove to the cart had been brought all the way from Palestine to Florence by a knight of the twelfth century, who kindled his torch at the Sacred Tomb, and rode all the way home with his face to his horse's tail in order to keep the flame alive. Regarded as a sacred function the whole thing is devoid of dignity, and indeed beneath contempt. Yet all Tuscany seemed to be assembled on the occasion. At least four or five thousand persons must have been within the Cathedral, and not less than twenty-five or thirty thousand managed to cram themselves into the huge square outside, while every street in Florence was packed so closely that it was difficult to struggle along. I wondered whether these good folk really retained their "beautiful old beliefs," mixed with modern fireworks. At any rate it is certain that the failure of the dove to fly out of the Cathedral caused much depression, and the newspapers next morning wrote pathetically of the disappointment as deep and universal. Obviously more care should be taken in so important a matter, for if the amount of corn and wine and oil of the year depends upon the performance of a captive rocket, it is at least worth while to employ a competent pyrotechnist.

During this visit we noticed a curious art-swindle

which is common in Italian galleries. Half a dozen artists' copyists may be apparently at work, but the odd thing is that all their pictures are practically finished, and if you look closely into their methods you will see that they only dip their brushes in water or turpentine and add nothing to what is already on the canvas. The explanation is that the copies have not been made by hand on the spot, but by a process conducted elsewhere, and that the dodge is merely one to catch buyers, who are delighted to take home a painting which, as they confidingly tell their friends, they have themselves seen in course of execution. These are not works of art, but colourable imitations.

The Italian Government has a unique fashion of protecting its telegraph poles from the attacks of small boys. On each of these standards is a notice, headed by a gruesome Death's-head-and-cross-bones, which declares, "Anybody who touches the wires will be at once killed as if by lightning" (*fulminato* = electrocuted). Whether this is true or not I cannot say. I regret that in my youth scientific teaching was so much neglected that I do not know whether any telegraph wires would be fatal to a person touching them. I have certainly seen a pheasant perched on our English lines without seeming to suffer any inconvenience. But I fancy the Italian boys may be awed by that Death's Head, and by a notice which, if mendacious, is official.

We did not entirely escape the Suffragists. The Italians are particularly keen on the question, and quote not only Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, but innumerable saints from the Roman calendar and matrons from Roman history, in support of the ladies. Many are beautiful, and they give voice to their ambition at

meetings,[1] though a scratching and caterwauling crusade would be beneath their dignity. I fancy some of our English enthusiasts might with advantage take a leaf out of their book, or at any rate change screams and shrieks into sighs and sobs. Though a woman's howls are detestable, her tears are irresistible.

Railway travelling in Italy since the lines have been taken over by the Government has steadily increased in inconvenience. Thieves pilfer your luggage, and even take the trouble to carry off the straps outside it, and the whole journey is one of discomfort, dirt, and struggle. But when you reach Bologna there is peace. That old-world city, which combines the picturesqueness of the past with much present prosperity, was pleasantly restful after the hustling at Florence. You may defy the elements, since all the principal streets are built with side arcades, so that you can be under cover from end to end of the town. You may even walk under a series of similar arcades for two and a half miles up to the Pilgrimage Church of the Madonna of St Luke and see the picture which is ascribed to the Apostle himself, and which was brought here from Constantinople in the twelfth century. And you will have from the Observatory above the roof of the Church one of the most extensive views in the province, ranging from the mountains to the sea.

On the outskirts of Bologna I witnessed the operation of the *dazio*, or *octroi*, an institution which would create a revolution in an English-speaking country. At the

[1] At one of these a speaker dwelt on the rights of her sex to equality in everything. "Where," she asked rhetorically, "would men be but for women?" "In Paradise," promptly answered a quick-witted Italian; and the audience had to admit the fatal weakness of Mother Eve.

city gate is the custom-house, with a quaint half-fortified balcony convenient for spectators. Here three or four soldiers are stationed armed with long iron skewers. They stop every cart or carriage that enters and examine it for contraband. The carriages are let off easily, but the market-carts undergo a close scrutiny, and are sometimes entirely unpacked. One dray of empty casks had the skewer plunged into each barrel to see that it came out dry, and in some cases the bottom of the vehicle was tapped violently to ascertain if it was hollow. Everything is taxed except bread and fruit, and the soldiers even invade the trams to see that nobody smuggles. Ours passed muster successfully, but when the officer had gone, an old priest dived under the seat and from beneath his cassock produced a bag (contents unknown), which he triumphantly deposited on the bench behind him. The people do not seem to mind what would be to us an irritating form of taxation.[1] For one thing, they are never in a hurry, and a chat at the tax-office and a joke with the soldiers come as a pleasant interlude. Bologna is a capital place at which to stop and take breath in one's journey, to make acquaintance with people as well as with art treasures, to study their manners and customs, to observe that while the bustling Briton is all angles the Italian is all curves, where we push and rush the Italian saunters and glides, and to find in a magnificent old palace the most comfortable and friendly of hotels.

On my way home through Switzerland I stayed at the house of a Swiss political economist of some note, who was anxious that I should be present at the annual

[1] At Castellamare an Englishman who had sea-water brought for his bath attracted the visit of an Excise officer, who suspected him of evading the salt-tax: while a duty of two soldi was levied on a cat as a "comestible."

Landesgemeinde, or open-air Parliament, of his Canton. It was certainly a striking scene. From the snows of the mountain-ranges, from the fruitful valleys which were then one mass of apple- and pear-blossom, from the lonely hamlets in the hills, and from the villages hidden in the great forests, the sturdy burghers of Appenzell thronged to the place of meeting. In Switzerland no measure can become law until, after having been passed by the Council of Government, it is submitted to the sovereign people. And therefore, on the last Sunday in April of every year, they assemble to pronounce their "yea" or "nay." Every man above the age of twenty-one is an elector, and if he omits, without good reason, to discharge his duty of voting he is liable to a fine of ten francs. Each voter is required by law to carry his sword to the assembly, but is equally prohibited from drawing it. The total electorate is about 12,000; and over 10,000 were present in the market-place of Trogen, near the Lake of Constance, on that Sunday morning. Fine, stalwart fellows are these Swiss—crack shots with the rifle, clever craftsmen, pleasant companions, with a strong sense of their political obligations. Everything was subordinated to the one day's Parliament; even the churches suspended their services, the pastors having previously inculcated on their flocks the duty of discharging a public trust. A big staging had been erected at one end of the market-place, and as the clock struck eleven, the out-going Landamman, or Governor, marched to the head of his councillors, preceded by the official beefeaters, in the dress of five centuries ago, and by a band which played patriotic airs. "Hats off!" There was an interval of five minutes "for silent prayer." Then ten thousand voices sang the national

hymn, and the effect was striking. I was reminded of the occasion when, in the Cathedral of St Peter at Rome, I heard a *Te Deum* for the recovery of Pope Leo XIII. The number of singers was said to be nearly thirty thousand; they were all familiar with the chant, and the volume of voice that filled the dome was tremendous. But it was less impressive, because less simple and spontaneous, than the glorious burst of patriotic chorus which leapt from the throats of these dwellers in the mountains after the interval of profound silence.

Then came a speech from the retiring Landamman, who recapitulated the chief events of his five years of office, preached a little to the populace on their political privileges, and called upon them to choose his successor. It was pretty obvious, even to a stranger, that this was a foregone conclusion, for although an opponent of the official candidate was brought forward, scarcely fifty hands were held up in his favour. Thereupon followed the election of various Councillors and Magistrates, and in each case a Herald shouted with stentorian voice, "Let him who votes for the election of Herr So-and-so hold up his right hand." Then the number of hands was estimated — not counted — by the new Landamman and each of five Councillors who were on the platform. After this the Herald called out again, "Let him who votes against the election of Herr So-and-so hold up his right hand." Sometimes the votes for and against seemed pretty equally balanced, and there was a second show of hands, but as a rule the majority on one side or the other was obvious. Five measures passed by the Government had to be submitted for the approval of the Assembly, and three of these were adopted without any substantial opposi-

tion. The fourth, however, was an Education Bill, under which it was proposed somewhat to extend the obligation to attend school and to improve the already very complete system. Copies and explanations of this as of the other Bills had been previously circulated among the electors, and strong feelings had been aroused. Some five thousand hands were held up in its favour, and apparently just about as many against it. The Landamman consulted his Councillors and ordered a second show of hands. This, too, was inconclusive, and a third and even a fourth were taken. Then the Landamman intimated that he and his colleagues were still in doubt; and he requested that the Mayors of the three largest towns in the Canton would come upon the platform and give their opinion. Their worships struggled up, very hot and red-faced, through the densely packed crowd, and then about half the right hands of that huge assemblage went up again in favour of the Bill. But the opposition was as strong as before, and even with the help of the Mayors the question was not decided until "For" and "Against" had been put no less than eight times, when the Landamman, after much consultation and comparing of individual estimates, declared that the measure had been rejected. The same fate befell a Bill by which farmers were to be required to insure their cattle, a portion of the premium being paid by the State. The burghers evidently disapproved of this interference with free-will, and very few hands were raised in support of the Government proposal.

Another impressive function followed. First, the newly elected Landamman took the oath of office, binding himself to keep the laws of the State and to preserve the liberty of the citizens; and afterwards the

oath was administered to all the ten thousand burghers, each man repeating it, clause by clause, with his head uncovered and his right hand raised to heaven. Then there was another "silent prayer," and the multitude dispersed. The inns drove a brisk trade, there were songs and choruses in plenty, but no drunkenness was in evidence, and the thousands made their way to their Alpine homes with the consciousness of having discharged their political duty for the year.

Freeman described this State Assembly of Appenzell as the Mother of Parliaments, the type of free government by the people. No doubt it is a great thing to make each individual feel directly that he has a share in the government of the country. But the disadvantages of thus referring every law for the approval of what is after all a tremendous crowd are obvious. In the first place, in the absence of a precise record of votes you never can be quite sure, when opinion is almost equally divided, which side has the majority, and in this very case much doubt existed as to the correctness of the decision about the popular verdict on the Education law. Certainly various unprejudiced persons (of whom I was one), having from different points carefully observed the voting, came independently to the conclusion that the majority was slightly in its favour. Then, the submission of a carefully designed law to popular suffrage gives too much preponderance to ignorance and prejudice. But, after all, those qualities are not absent from other systems. And these Swiss voters have no political axe to grind : they approve or condemn a measure with regard to its intrinsic merits, without an eye to possible office.

CHAPTER XXX.

VAGRANTS IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND—A TRUDGE WITH A TRAMP — PRISONS AND WORKHOUSES — POACHING — A CLERICAL CASUAL — A CLEVER IMPOSTOR — "HOLLOW-ROOFED JACK."

When I first took charge of the South-Western District, few tramps penetrated so far. West of the Tamar they were virtually non-existent, owing mainly, I understand, to the vigorous measures adopted by a late Chief Constable of Cornwall, who harried them so much if they begged that they soon gave him and his county a wide berth. Nor did they go far into Devon, and it was a rare thing, a dozen years ago, to find any considerable number even in Somerset. But of late, like the course of Empire, they have taken their way westward, and a good deal has been done to provide accommodation for them in the workhouses of the two last-named counties. Blocks of cells have been built, and here and there the regulations requiring their detention for two nights, with work on the intermediate day, in return for their lodging and (very indifferent) board, have been enforced with varying degrees of stringency. But the system is thoroughly unsatisfactory. The regulations were presumably designed to secure uniformity; but they contain so many alternative provisions, and

allow guardians and their officers such wide powers of making exceptions, that a tramp may visit a dozen casual wards in succession and be treated differently in each. Here is a story embodying some characteristic experiences.[1]

He came jauntily down the prison steps, and it was in no shamefaced fashion that he asked me to "spare half a pipe o' baccy for a poor chap just out of There." Tobacco, like a touch of nature, makes the whole world kin, so I pulled out my pouch while keeping a wary eye on my possibly light-fingered friend. "You needn't be afraid," he said, "I'm no watch-snatcher, and, what's more, 'tis for nothing of that sort that his Majesty has been entertaining me since last Monday in a warm lodging, with plenty to eat and only a little light work by way of amusement." "A hare ran against your legs, and the keeper thought you had killed it?" I inquired. "No," he answered, "though I won't say that I never had to interfere with some of those noisy pheasants that keep on screaming when you're trying to sleep by the edge of a wood. But there's no poaching in the month of March." "Perhaps a case of what the charge-sheets call 'drunk and disorderly'?" I suggested. "Not a bit of it," was the reply, "though I shouldn't mind a taste of whisky just now, for that and my smoke are the only things I have missed this week. And I have to walk a dozen miles to B—— Workhouse to-day."

Closely scrutinised, he had nothing of the conventional villain about him, and his eyes twinkled in a fashion that seemed to intimate that he was a laughing philosopher who might be worth cultivating. So I gave him the wherewithal for some refreshment, and said that as I should presently be going in the direction of B——, I should be glad to hear the story which he was evidently bursting to tell. We started, and I

[1] I published this narrative in the *Western Morning News* of November 5, 1907.

found that his narrative supplied some curious side-lights on the results of our machinery for dealing with what Swiss statutes call "work-shyness."

"Refusal to perform prescribed task of stone-breaking —seven days' imprisonment." This, he told me, had been his sentence, and he had brought it on himself "a-purpose." In the previous week he had helped to drive a herd of Devon steers to a fair, had spent, in standing treat, the money he had received for the job, and had then gone on some five miles, through pouring rain, to the nearest casual ward. There they gave him nothing but bread and water for supper, made no attempt to dry his soaked clothes, and set him next morning to break some of the hardest boulders he had ever come across. "You couldn't do anything with them, the hammer scarcely chipped them, and jarred your arm all the way up." So he thought he would like to try a change, and it occurred to him that as he did not fancy trudging the fifty miles to the county town in wet weather, the simplest plan was to get sent there at the public expense. This was quite easy. He refused to do his task, was brought before the local Petty Sessions, was sentenced to a week's imprisonment, and was despatched by rail "with a very good sort of 'copper' for company" to the county gaol.

He declared that the king uses his visitors uncommonly well. "You might suppose that they send a man to prison in order to encourage him to go there again, while the poor fellow who applies for help from the Guardians is looked on as a criminal fit only to be treated as a dog—but without being given a bone. At most casual wards you get nothing but a little bread and water for breakfast, bread and water (with a bit of cheese about the size of a walnut) for dinner, and bread and water again for supper. In prison you have a good square meal on admission, with capital hot meat—none of your Chicago stuff—and plenty of bread, while for breakfast and supper there is warm porridge or cocoa instead of cold water. Then just look at the difference

in work. In the casual ward you may have to hammer at beach boulders or to saw wood for eight or nine hours until your arms ache. In prison you only play at work.[1] They give you a piece of sacking and a needle and pack-thread to make it into a bag for the post-office; but you do as much or as little of it as you like. And if you choose to do none at all, what with the doctor being called upon solemnly to report whether you are too weak to use a needle, what with the Governor having you up to explain the terrible things which will happen unless you obey, what with your promises to do your best, and what with more medical reports, warnings, and explanations, your sentence has come to an end before the first bag is made. Not that a week's imprisonment means imprisonment for seven days. That would be too cruel. A man convicted on Monday is discharged on Saturday morning, having at the utmost made some pretence of work for three or four days. Sometimes the sentence for refusing the task in the casual ward is nominally three days, which means two days doing nothing except eating, and one day's amusement with the packing-needle. Plenty of men object to real work, but very few take the trouble to object to the sham work which they are supposed to do as prisoners. It is something to occupy their time."

He added, however, that although seven-day sentences for vagrancy offences were the most common, and even the shorter term was pretty frequent, the magistrates of one or two counties had come to an arrangement among themselves never to give less than a month. Those counties were known and shunned. But as a general rule everything depends on the individual justice.

[1] Compare the evidence of the Medical Officer of Pentonville Prison before the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy (Blue-book 2891 of 1906, p. 313), to the effect that sack sewing is the most onerous task to which a prisoner is put; that there is no hard labour which involves physical exertion; that "hard labour is a term used in the present day, but the thing itself is absolutely obsolete."

"The Mayor of one town used not only to discharge every tramp brought before him, but generally gave him half a crown to help him on his way. This plan, however, did not answer, for the roads began to swarm with beggars, and his Worship retired into private life. In a southern county a man had committed the offence of tearing up his clothes in the casual ward, and a policeman took him to a magistrate's house with a rug pinned round him. The magistrate was in the middle of a garden-party, and, being furious at the interruption, at once discharged the offender, and gave the constable a violent blowing up. 'Well, sir,' he answered, 'at any rate I must have my rug,' which he forthwith snatched away, whereupon the J.P. and his guests had the unusual sight of a naked man rushing across the lawn in the direction of the workhouse in order to cover himself with the rags of the clothes which he had left there."

"But how about repeated offences?" I asked. "Does not the tramp with half a dozen convictions against him get a longer sentence than one who is brought up for the first time?" "Not a bit of it, unless he is fool enough to stick to the same district. The borough police knows nothing about county convictions; one county has no information about those in another; even two divisions of the same county very seldom take any trouble about identifying each other's offenders. I would back myself, choosing my own route, to walk from Bristol to Newcastle, and to be had up by the police twenty times within six months for vagrancy offences, yet not once to have an increased sentence on the ground of a previous conviction. For merely begging I should generally be discharged with a warning, and I don't fancy that the value of my sack-making during perhaps a dozen terms, varying from three days to a fortnight apiece, would amount to ten shillings altogether. Not that I am often in gaol; I am too fond of my liberty. Last year I served a sentence of three months, and that sickened me of prison for my life, for though I was fed well, and

had scarcely anything to do, I felt like a squirrel in a cage."

"Vagrancy Acts again?" I inquired. "No, it was all through listening to a poulterer who wanted to gain a bit of money easily, and to keep his own skin safe. I happened to be at X at the end of September, and after making friends with me over a glass of beer, he told me that he wanted some pheasants to sell on the 1st October, and he knew of a covert, some three miles away, where a number of young birds had been turned down, but the keeper was going off on the next day (Sunday) to see his sweetheart, and there would be nobody to interfere with a little shooting on the sly. He had heard that I had done a bit of poaching in my youth, and if I would undertake the job he would lend me a gun, with some cartridges, making very little report, and would arrange for a place for depositing the pheasants, which he would fetch in his cart early on Monday. Everything seemed easy, and I agreed. I had a very nice morning's shooting, and nobody interfered; but as I crossed a road between two woods, a 'copper' who had hid himself in some bushes collared me, insisted on searching me (though I believe he had no right to do so), and when he found several pheasants in my pocket marched me off to the town. Next day I was had up before a bench of two magistrates, of whom one was a dummy, while the chairman was the most bigoted old gentleman I ever met. He lectured me as if I had murdered my mother in a church. Ordinary poaching, he said, was wicked enough, but as for the man who would kill pheasants on a Sunday morning, and out of season, nothing could be too bad for him. He was going to send me to prison for half a year, but the clerk whispered something to him, and then, with a good deal of praise of his own good nature, he made the term only three months. And to think that if I had waited one day, it would not have been either Sunday or September, and I should have got off with twenty-eight days at most!"

I quoted some verses in which an old squire who, on his death-bed, is recalling the sins of his life, expresses his sense of the wickedness of a somewhat similar deed—

> "I do remember on a Sabbath morn
> I shot hen pheasants in the standing corn;
> 'Twas in September; could the devil plan
> A crime more hideous to God and man?"

"Yes," he said, "that is just the way my old gentleman looked at it. But another time I had the luck to escape a conviction by knowing that the man who wanted to prosecute me was as bad a sinner as myself. I was walking along a well-known river when I saw a salmon of eight or nine pounds lying in the shallows, close to the bank, with his back fin now and then above water. Somebody had left a hay-fork in a meadow close by, and I couldn't help thinking that it wouldn't be hard to make money out of the fish. So I gaffed him with the fork; but just as I had brought him to land, up came a member of the fishing club which rents the river, and I was fairly caught. 'Poaching vagabond, infernal scoundrel, shouldn't mind so much if you had killed him by fair fishing, but for that sort of trick you shall go before the magistrates, and I hope you will get the six months you deserve.' This was the sort of language that was thrown at me in a fury. But then my luck came in. It happened that in the morning I had been behind a bush watching this very same gentleman as he fished. I noticed that after making cast after cast without effect, he had carefully looked if there was anybody within sight, and had then taken off his fly and put on a lobworm as a bait; result—in a very few minutes—a fine salmon. Soon afterwards another fisherman appeared in the distance, the fly was carefully replaced, and the water was flogged with as little effect as before. I had overheard words in which he described to his friend the very fly which he had (not) used; and it now flashed upon me that it was a rule of the club that all other baits were prohibited. So

I gently hinted to him that I had been close by when he caught his fish in the morning, that I knew what he had caught it with, and that I expected the justices and the Press would like to have the information too. 'You thundering blackguard,' he said, 'do you intend to blackmail me?' 'Not at all, sir,' I answered, 'but if a gentleman attacks my character by making public my kind of fishing, I don't see why I shouldn't do the same as to his kind of fishing.' To make a long story short, he was afraid of being shown up, and not only consented to let me off, but paid me half a sovereign for my salmon, and I have no doubt gave his friends at the fishing club his own account of his sport. Still, as I said just now, no more poaching for me at present, for though I do not mind a day or two in prison now and then, especially in winter, I cannot stand the loss of the freedom of the road for more than a week at a time."

"But after all," I remarked, "your life must be a hard one. How did you come to take to it?" "Well," he answered, "I suppose it is the old story. Mother died young, father married again. I got little food and much stick. Then I ran away from home, and was cabin boy on a barge, and afterwards did a voyage or two on a coaster, but never stuck long to one thing, though I generally seemed to get among a drinking lot however often I changed. Then I enlisted, went through the Boer war, got hit twice, but not badly, and was in hospital with fever. When I came home I was heartily sick of the army, and took my discharge with a gratuity, which might have given me a bit of a start if I had saved it. But I was like most other fellows, stood treat all round until not a halfpenny was left, and in a month I was on my beam ends. Afterwards I got two or three jobs, but it didn't seem as if I cared to keep in one place for any time."

"I suppose your soldiering had unsettled you?" I hazarded. "No," he said, "I think it was the unsettled spirit which made me take to soldiering, and if I had not gone out to Africa I dare say I should have gone on the road before I did. A man who

is inclined to wander, must wander, and you can't break him of it. It has its advantages. For instance, it's a very clean life. People talk about 'dirty tramps,' but the tramp has a bath two or three times a-week, and I should like to know how many farm-labourers or colliers, or any ordinary workmen, wash themselves all over as often as once a-month. The slums do not have bath-rooms.

"Then, the society may be not very respectable, but it is lively. You run against all sorts of customers, who've seen all sorts of life, and who are up to all sorts of tricks. One of the best fellows I ever knew was a Catholic priest, who used to be on tramp in the Eastern Counties. The story about him was that he had committed some offence, and that the Pope had sentenced him to go from casual ward to casual ward for seven years. I cannot say whether this is true or not, but anyhow I have met him over and over again on the road and in workhouses, always full of queer yarns, and ready to do a good turn to anybody.

"Some of the regular cadgers, too, are real jokers, and are proud of telling their dodges for getting money. The most successful I ever heard of was invented by a man who went about with a letter, which he said was addressed to his brother, who was dangerously ill, and he begged for a stamp to send it. In one day he went to a hundred and fifty houses, and only at three or four did he receive a refusal to give him a stamp so that he might write to his dying brother. So he made about twelve shillings a-day until the trick became known.

"In most of the town and some of the country workhouses, each man has a cell to himself for sleeping, and another leading out of it in which he breaks stones. In other Unions there is only an Association ward, in which hammocks are slung side by side, and there is plenty of talk. But nearly all where I have slept (I never go to London) are kept clean, and as for vermin, I have seen more of them in the Transvaal than I have ever come across in casual wards,

although I am told that in old times the workhouses were pretty bad in this way, and baths were almost unknown.

"To my mind there are two specially cruel things about the treatment of the tramp. One is that he is not fed nearly so well as the prisoner, although he has at any rate to do some real work. The jail-bird's rations have been improved and his labour lessened, while the tramp is rather worse off than he was a score of years ago. After a day's stone-breaking or wood-splitting on bread and water, he is discharged at six o'clock next morning, having had nothing but his crust for breakfast. The next workhouse is, perhaps, fifteen miles off, and it is not a pleasant job to walk all day and feel half starved. Yet if he begs on the road—and what else can he do?—he is collared by the police. So he is forced into prison. Of course, he does ask for help, and he generally gets it, especially from the poor. But the law does its best to turn him into a criminal."

"Are there not societies which assist him?" "Very few. In Dorset and one or two other counties he may get a bit of bread by going to particular stations for it; but that is all. There is a Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, but who ever heard of a Discharged Tramps' Aid Society? The workhouse chaplain generally considers tramps beneath his notice; they are forbidden to attend Church service in the workhouse for fear of carrying infection to the worthy paupers; and their case is supposed to be too hopeless for any sermons or even advice.

"Then why don't I leave the road? There you have me; and I suppose I ought to be ashamed of myself for saying that I have got so much in the habit[1] of

[1] This frame of mind is graphically expressed in some lines of anonymous authorship—

"His purse was low, his honour scant,
He did all sorts of things he shouldn't;
He was, in short, a Mend-I-cant,
And what is more, amend he wouldn't."

going about the country that I could not bring myself to do a fortnight's steady work, even if I was sure of not spending my wages as soon as I earned them. You see I have never learned a trade—nobody tries to teach us fellows anything likely to be useful—and I like to be my own master. Perhaps I have not grit enough left in me. Anyhow, I would rather be wandering over the country than carrying one sack of coals after another all day long, from a coal hulk to a factory, which is what I did last. In a casual ward somebody wrote on the wall—

> 'Of all sorts of business the cadger's the best,
> Because when he's tired he can sit down and rest.'

And perhaps some of us were born tired. I know a man who said he should like to have on his grave—

> 'Friends, grieve not for me, that death doth us sever;
> I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever,

—and that's the sort of feeling I have."

Here we came to the cross-roads, and I parted from my feckless friend, who had given me something to think about. I reflected that he was a rather favourable specimen of between twenty and thirty thousand of the work-shy who now spend most of their days in begging, and their nights in casual wards, common lodging-houses, and prisons, and who are a public nuisance. Short terms of imprisonment have no terror for them, and the business is becoming increasingly popular.

This particular vagrant seemed to bear no malice against the police, but most of his class are more or less at war with those representatives of law and order, and a constantly increasing section of the community is thus at daggers drawn with society. Of one celebrated tramp who was typical in this respect, my colleague, Mr Baldwyn Fleming, who knew him well, tells a capital story. His name was Jack Harris (otherwise "Hollow-Roofed Jack," from a peculiarity in

his voice), and his great delight was to outwit the police. His most famous performance in this line was on an occasion when, being tired of the monotony of the workhouse, he walked down to the neighbouring village and began smashing windows. He was taken up, and a constable was told off to convey him to Devizes jail, some twelve miles off. Unfortunately the policeman was young and inexperienced. As they neared a public-house on the road, the handcuffed prisoner looked confidingly up at him and said, "Copper, I suppose I shall get a pretty long dose for this." P.C., "I suppose you will." Harris, "Three months, I daresay." "P.C., "Very likely." A short silence. Harris, "Copper, you don't look a bad sort, not like the rest of 'em. I wonder if you'd do me a good turn?" P.C., "Well, what is it?" Harris, "You see I sha'n't have a chance of a drink for many a week to come; and I've got a penny in my pocket. When we come to the Bell, I don't ask you to let me get down, but will you nip out, like the good man you seem, and just get me a glass of ale? It will be my last for such a long time." The young constable foolishly did "nip out," and directly he was inside the door, Harris, handcuffed as he was, managed to get hold of the reins and drove off, as hard as he could pelt, towards Devizes. When he reached the jail he shouted till a warder came out. Warder, "What do you want?" Harris, "I am a prisoner come to give myself up." Warder, "Prisoner? Why, where is the constable in charge of you?" Harris, "It is the constable's business to look after me, not mine to look after the constable. However, if you want to know where he is, I left him boozing in the Bell at Seend."

Meanwhile the poor policeman had come out with a glass of ale and found his bird flown. The police-cart was just disappearing in the distance. He ran a long way after it, and when nearly exhausted was delighted to find it apparently stopping for him at the top of a hill. As he toiled toward it he shouted to be taken up. "Then," said Harris, "I told him to make haste, because I was in a hurry for my dinner, and he began to walk slowly to the trap, puffing and blowing like anything. So when he got a bit closer I says to him, 'I ain't going to wait no longer, because I ain't supposed to take passengers, but when I get home to Devizes you can have the lot all to yourself to come back in,' and then I guv the horse a touch with the whip, and on I went again and drove straight to the jail." There was nothing for the victim but to trudge the weary miles on foot, and of course when he reached the prison Harris was in his glory. The magistrates censured the policeman strongly, and postponed his promotion, but they did not dismiss him, so to that extent Harris was disappointed, for his one genuine delight in life was to get a "copper" into serious trouble. He thought the Force fair game after all the trouble they had caused him.

The case, however, did not end here. It was just the time when everybody was talking about hypnotism and the like; and Harris, who was a delightfully plausible scamp, actually persuaded the Justices that he was not responsible for breaking the windows, but had been hypnotised by somebody, and was acting under an uncontrollable impulse which he could not resist. The charge against him was dismissed, and the police had to convey him back to the workhouse, where he arrived in a most happy frame of mind, having

taken in everybody all round and achieved one of the triumphs of his lifetime.

One might multiply such stories indefinitely, but what strikes anybody who, like myself, has visited scores of casual wards and conversed with hundreds of tramps, is that our system goes a long way towards producing these parasites of society. We certainly do not pamper them, but we do nothing either to train them to useful work and decent habits, or to utilise their labour. The result is that our roads are becoming more and more full of beggars, who in some places are a serious nuisance, and I used sometimes to wonder whether it might not be desirable to profit by the experience of foreign countries in dealing with this matter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

INQUIRY AS TO VAGRANCY IN SWITZERLAND—HELP TO WORK-SEEKERS—FORCED LABOUR FARMS.

In the course of a good many holidays spent in Switzerland and Italy it was impossible to help noticing the difference between the two countries in the matter of mendicity. A favourite haunt of mine has been a delightful hotel perched upon a Mediterranean cliff some fifteen miles beyond Genoa, with the Bay of Rapallo stretching out in front of it, and the blue Apennines in the distance. It is one of the few hotels that I know where you get the little refinements of life, and, but for one drawback, is altogether delightful. That drawback is that you cannot go out for half-an-hour's walk without being pestered by beggars, some of whom exhibit repellent wounds and deformities in order to excite your compassion and extract your pence. This sort of thing gets on one's nerves, and is really a substantial nuisance. On the other hand I have stayed at Locarno on Lake Maggiore, in the Swiss Canton of Ticino, for a whole fortnight, without encountering more than one beggar; and this one, as I was afterwards told by the Commissary of Police, was a man who had been repeatedly punished for the offence, but who, being over seventy, had at

last been given up as irreclaimable. And in many different years since 1861 it has been obvious to me, as to everybody else, that whereas beggars used to abound in Switzerland they have been steadily decreasing in number up to the present time. When I was abroad in the spring of 1904 it occurred to me that it might be well to investigate the methods by which vagabondage had thus been conquered, so I suggested to the Local Government Board that I should be instructed to make an inquiry. Mr Walter Long, the then President, acquiesced, and I was furnished with the necessary credentials. Lord Acton, who was acting as British Chargé d'Affaires at Berne, took a good deal of trouble to bring me into personal relations with the officials of the Swiss Government, and on all hands I was supplied with facilities for learning and seeing everything possible of a system which was generally agreed to have proved eminently successful.

It is no doubt true that in particular resorts of tourists a good many common devices, such as blowing horns, or jödelling, or awaking echoes, or opening gates, or showing paths, in order to extract a gratuity from the traveller, are merely embroidered forms of begging, and their existence makes it difficult to repress undisguised mendicity. But the unanimous opinion of well-informed persons seems to be that, although begging has not been extinguished, it is now rarely so prevalent as to be a serious nuisance, and in most cantons it has been effectually dealt with. Help for the honest working man who takes to the road in genuine search of a job; detention in a labour colony for the inveterate loafer and shirker,—this is the broad principle adopted in Switzerland, and it has answered excellently. For assistance to the real worker an or-

ganisation called the Intercantonal Union for Poor Travellers has been established, and extends over most of the country. It is a voluntary society, but certain contributions are made to it by the State. If a man has no means, and wishes to wander in search of employment, he has not merely to say that he desires it, but to show that he has actually worked for an employer within the past three months. On this he is furnished with a book which authorises him to obtain food and lodging at any one of the rest-houses that are dotted about. There he is helped to a certain extent to get employment, though if he is found to have refused any job which is reasonably suitable, his book is confiscated at once, and he is left to shift for himself.

This system takes away all excuse for begging, as the public know that a man will be fed and housed so long as he tries to obtain work and accepts it when offered; the only other condition being that he shall not apply more than once in six months at the same relief station. On the other hand, if he persists in begging, if he makes his wife and family a charge on the public by his devotion to *Schnapps*, if he is, in the expressive word which finds place in the statutes of most of the cantons, "work-shy," he is warned once or twice by the police, and if this proves ineffectual is taken before the Council of his district. They do not content themselves, like English magistrates, with inflicting a ridiculous little sentence of a few days, but send him to a Forced Labour Farm for six months, twelve months, or even two or three years. There he is made to work from rosy morn to dewy eve, being employed mainly in farming operations, but also in a number of special industries suited to unskilled labourers. He can

shorten his term by steady work, and it often happens that, being made to labour he acquires the habit, and being cut off from drink he loses the craving.

Nearly every canton has one or more of these institutions either belonging to it or under agreement to receive persons from it. All are, in fact, prisons; but ordinary offenders are usually kept more or less apart from those who are called "administratives," as having been committed by the Council of their Commune, but not sentenced by a Criminal Court. I visited a good many of these establishments, which seemed to me to be all organised with the view of turning loafers into labourers, and to be on the whole wonderfully successful in attaining their end. The best which I saw was the Forced Labour Farm at Witzwyl, belonging to the Canton of Berne. It consists of about two thousand acres of land, at the north-east end of the Lake of Neuchâtel, and was bought in 1895 for only £15 an acre, as much of it was water-logged and subject to inundations. The work of reclamation, very skilfully devised, has been carried out exclusively by the labour of the men committed, and at the time of my visit about two-thirds of the whole had been brought to a high state of cultivation. It has accommodation for about two hundred, although the number seldom exceeds one hundred and fifty. The violent and insubordinate, and those who make attempts to escape, are transferred to ordinary prisons, but such cases are rare.

The original buildings were very scanty, so they have been reconstructed and added to by the inmates, no outside labour being employed. The staff numbers forty-five, and it was interesting to observe that they were evidently acting as leading hands rather than as warders. They were working with the others, and did

not spare themselves. The Director dwelt on the effect of their example, and described how newcomers were often unwilling to do any work, but as they found everybody hard at it they soon fell into line with the rest.

The guiding principle of the system at Witzwyl is to "improve the land by man, and man by the land." A huge marsh has been converted into a fertile farm, and land which was bought for £30,000 has now much more than doubled in value. The valuation of stock and buildings which was only £200 in 1896 has risen to £17,385. They have about 500 cattle, 50 horses, and 200 pigs. They not only grow corn, vegetables of various kinds, and beetroot for making sugar, but they supply the neighbouring town of Neuchâtel with farm and dairy produce, while they have workshops where tailoring, shoemaking, weaving, smiths' work, paper-bag-making, and other industries are carried on.

The result is that, if we disregard the price originally paid for the land, the whole establishment is self-supporting. It is true that hitherto it has received a grant from the Cantonal Government, but the value of the estate has been annually increased by more than the amount of that subsidy.

Every man is actually employed between ten and eleven hours a-day, and the feeding is ample, though little meat is given. I was struck with the healthy and vigorous appearance of the men, and having been brought up in the old-fashioned faith that strength depends largely upon meat and beer, I was surprised to find that they could do so much and keep so well on what was mainly a vegetable diet.

The effect as regards reformation of character appears

to be more satisfactory than that claimed by any other system. Of course many failures take place, for some men are drink-sodden, or are constitutionally and chronically work-shy. But the abstention from alcohol and the requirement of steady labour do wonders. The best proof is that comparatively few are sent back for a fresh term, although the police system is so complete that they would certainly be caught if they relapsed. At any rate it appears that most of the younger men are permanently reformed; various efforts are made to give them a fair start—some are passed on to a Free Labour Colony, which serves as a sort of half-way house; a few of the best are retained as officers at Witzwyl; while situations for others are found by the Society for the Aid of Discharged Prisoners at Berne.

This appeared to me to be an admirably organised establishment, and the Director, Mr Otto Kellerhals, impressed me strongly with the common-sense which tempered his enthusiasm, and with the skill which he applied to his unpromising material. He was convinced of the unwisdom of giving prisoners work which is mainly mechanical and has in it nothing to engage their interest or to teach them anything likely to enable them to maintain themselves when discharged. He admitted that, in the case of the hardened and violent, punishment rather than reform has to take the first place, but he believes that most offences are the result of laziness, and he finds that this has the best chance of being cured by such varied agricultural operations as are carried on at Witzwyl. When a man sees the products of his labour which have grown up before his eyes he is induced to exert himself, and is stimulated in a fashion which contrasts with the leaden monotony of such occupations as stone-breaking or corn-

grinding. Besides, it is in his power, if he shows himself industrious, to shorten his term of detention by as much as one-third, and this is a powerful incentive to exertion.

One of the other Forced Labour Farms which I visited was also (apart from the prime cost of the land) self-supporting, and in only one (where the area of the land was very small) did the aggregate amount of all expenditure amount to as much as 5s. 6d. weekly per inmate. But in a Free Labour Colony which I also visited, the case was very different. This had been established by a philanthropic society in North Switzerland, the buildings being those of an old monastery on the vine-clad slopes of the Lake of Constance. Its object is to furnish employment for men temporarily out of work, for those who have only just begun tramping, and for ex-prisoners. Entry and discharge are purely voluntary. After the first fortnight each man is credited with a few pence a day and receives the sum total on leaving. The farm consists of about three hundred acres, partly pasture and partly vineyard, but the expenditure for an average of about sixty men is over £3000 a-year, and thus, although the institution gets all their work for nothing (except the trifling allowances already mentioned), the yearly cost is about £50 a head. It seems clear that in Switzerland, as in England, this sort of institution, where there is no detention and each man is at liberty to do as little as he likes and to leave whenever he pleases, cannot be run on lines which are anything like commercially profitable.

I also visited the Poor-house for the City of Berne, which is devoted to the reception of persons who have come under the charge of the ratepayers owing to physical or mental defects, as well as those who have

become destitute on account of begging, refusal to work, or drinking habits. It is in some respects like an English workhouse, with the addition of a farm of about 250 acres, and with the enforcement of compulsory detention. Tramps and habitual drunkards are usually sent there for either one or two years, but may shorten the term by industry. They are mostly employed on farm work. There is a much greater mixture of different classes of inmates than in a well-ordered English workhouse having, like this, between three and four hundred inmates. Separation of idiots from the sane, even of men from women, is not rigidly maintained, and inconvenience and irregularity are stated to result. But the farm provides excellent employment, and is remunerative. And the detention of inveterate loafers and habitual drinkers, who would otherwise do no profitable work and would be pests to the public, is a distinct gain to the community which thus utilises their labour, while it is not unjust to the individuals who can always secure their release by showing themselves during a reasonable period fit to be trusted.

On the whole, after having discussed the question in Switzerland with a large number of persons qualified to speak with authority, I found reason for ascribing the diminution of mendicity, first, to the stringent measures adopted by the police for repressing it; secondly, to the steps taken against the work-shy; and thirdly, to the special facilities afforded to those travelling in genuine search for employment. As the public at large recognise the fact that every industrious man can obtain board and lodging gratuitously, they are unwilling to give money for the purpose, and when there are no givers there are soon no beggars. The fact that labour is in

much demand tends in the same direction, and public opinion has been aroused to indignation at the notion of able-bodied men being allowed to beg instead of working. There is a well-known proverb, "Mussiggang ist aller Laster Anfang," which may be rendered, "Loafing is the beginning of all vices" (or more tersely "Tramp means Scamp"), and both Courts and Councils set themselves to repress this sort of work-shyness. The Swiss are less given to sentimentality than we are, and are hard-headed. If we copy their methods of reform we must also copy the common-sense with which they are applied.

The report of which this is the substance appeared as a Parliamentary paper just at the end of the Session of 1904, and was taken up warmly by the newspapers. Most of them, by the way, seized with delight on the word "work-shy," which they brought into special prominence, and which I may claim the credit of having added to the English language. At least I have not met with any instance of its use before the year 1904, though it is now pretty common.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE VAGRANCY COMMITTEE—ITS RECOMMENDATIONS—SWISS AND ENGLISH PRISONS—PRINCETOWN.

THE tramp has been a nuisance throughout the ages. Mr J. S. Davy has alighted upon a passage in Herodotus asserting that as long ago as the sixth century B.C. a law of King Amasis of Egypt required every man to state annually how he got his living, and if he could not show that he made an honest livelihood he was to be put to death. Even in this country, and in comparatively modern times, such punishments as whipping, branding, commitment to slavery, and even hanging, have been directed towards the repression, though not the reformation, of the mendicant. A certain halo of picturesqueness used to surround the wayfarer of old,—the Autolycus, or the Edie Ochiltree, full of wise saws and modern instances, who was welcome at fair or wedding, and who in the days before newspapers carried the gossip of the town through the country. But the popular notion of this pleasant figure has given place to the sordid reality of the tramp who wanders from slum to casual ward, or from common lodging-house to charitable shelter, on the roads an importunate beggar, often demanding alms with threats at cottages where only women are

left at home, a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, a spreader of infectious disease, and generally a pest to the community. Of late years the number of these men, who always profess to be looking for work and take care never to find it, has enormously increased, and the evil has attained such dimensions as to show that our present system is in need of thorough reform. Early in 1904 Mr Walter Long, then President of the Local Government Board, received a joint deputation from the Central Poor Law Conference and the Poor Law Unions' Association, which together may be taken to represent the entire body of local administrators of the law; and as a result a Departmental Committee was appointed to inquire into the whole subject. I was instructed to appear before this Committee as the official witness on behalf of the Local Government Board.

It was a particularly strong body of experts. Its Chairman was Mr J. L. Wharton, who had been made a Privy Councillor in recognition of his valuable services on various Commissions and Committees, and who, as Chairman of Quarter Sessions of the County of Durham, had gained much useful experience. Sir William Chance, the well-known organiser of Poor Law Conferences, embodied the knowledge of many Boards of Guardians; Mr J. S. Davy, C.B., Chief Inspector under the Local Government Board, was full of the concentrated wisdom acquired during many years' study of workhouse Masters and of tramps; two representatives of the Home Office and a Chief Constable were familiar with the ways of police and of prisons; while Dr Downes was able to speak with scientific authority as to dietaries and kindred subjects.

It was a real pleasure to give evidence before a

Committee like this, who knew their subject and did not waste time over irrelevancies. We were fated to see a good deal of each other, for my evidence occupied four days; and in the course of it I was asked only one question short of a thousand. I began by giving a sketch of the measures against vagrancy from Tudor times downward, all being in the direction of repression. The numbers of tramps had constantly fluctuated, and it was not till after the middle of the nineteenth century that some attempts were made to bring them within the scope of Poor Law administration. In 1882 the existing system was established under an Act introduced by the late Albert Pell, and the regulations have remained in force with scarcely any alteration during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. It was provided that accommodation for tramps should be supplied at all workhouses, that they should be detained for two nights and be made to work hard during the intervening day, that they should be fed mostly on bread (and not much of that), and that they should be discharged next morning without any provision for a mid-day meal. In this way they had the alternative of walking perhaps more than a dozen miles to the next workhouse in a half-starved condition or of being taken up for begging if they asked for help by the way. The Order was intended to secure uniformity as regards diet, detention, and task, but since the Guardians were intrusted with the widest possible discretion as to each of these points it was no wonder that in the six or seven hundred Unions of the Kingdom there was infinite variety of treatment.

Meanwhile vagrancy grew rapidly. No doubt its extent was much exaggerated in public estimation.

For example, a statement went the round of the newspapers to the effect that in the four counties of Berks, Bucks, Oxford, and Warwick the annual average was about 200,000. As a matter of fact, the returns showed that the casuals relieved on a single night in the whole of England had never been as many as 9000, and it was only by multiplying the number of men by that of daily admissions (so that 10 men admitted to workhouses 200 times in the course of the year would count as 2000) that we got enormous figures like the above for only four counties. People do not understand that the tramps are like a stage army, appearing again and again. Another cause had unduly swollen the figures, namely, that when a tramp had his breakfast in one workhouse and his supper in another he appeared in the statistics of both Unions, and therefore was often counted as two tramps. It was not till the year 1903 or 1904 that returns were obtained of the number sleeping in casual wards on every Friday, and this new count showed the extraordinary rise in vagrancy which was just then taking place, and of which we should have known nothing under the old system of half-yearly statistics.

Upon another point there has been much misapprehension. Astounding statements are published as to the thousands of children, dragged by their parents along the roads from workhouse to workhouse, yet as a matter of fact the number of child tramps at any one time in all England is scarcely ever more than between two and three hundred, among a total of say ten thousand casuals. Of women, too, the number has been much overestimated, for only about a tenth of the vagrants are of the female sex.

One reason for the increase of tramps is that if once

a man gets on the road, especially in summer, it has a sort of fascination which makes him very reluctant to leave it. Whenever trade is slack and hands are dismissed wholesale the wandering ranks receive large accessions, and a good many of these recruits never go back to steady work. The short-service system has been accused of driving many men to vagrancy. But I put it to the Committee that it is the man with a wandering turn of mind who enlists. If he did not enlist he would be on the roads for his three, or five, or seven years; he is at any rate kept off for that time, and this is so much gain. The system of gratuities on discharge is often blamed. Some men are perfectly reckless; they spend in drink however many pounds they get, then they take to vagrancy, miserable creatures perhaps for the rest of their lives. But probably if they had not gone into the Army at all, though they would not have had this particular big drink, they would have been on the road, living more or less on the public.

No doubt these wanderers now and then spread infectious disease broadcast, particularly when small-pox is about. The Local Government Board received many reports to this effect, including one declaring that "the sanitarians of the twenty-first century will look back with amazement on their ancestors who inflicted fines for moving pigs out of areas infected with swine fever, but allowed a tribe of tramps to wander at large spreading small-pox." One of my colleagues reported that in 1903 small-pox had been repeatedly introduced into the casual wards of his district. In one instance, the nature of the man's illness was detected, but no infectious hospital existed. Temporary arrangements had therefore to be made which cost over £200. The

irony of the case came when the man was convalescent, and one of the Guardians kindly offered him work. He replied that he never had done any work and never would. He was twenty-eight years of age.

I urged on the Committee the adoption of some modification of the Swiss system, especially by making a distinction between the genuine work-seeker and the inveterate mendicant; and by establishing Forced Labour Farms. I pointed out the futility of the plan of committing vagrants for such terms as three days, or even a week, to prison, where they get much better fed and are much more lightly worked than in the casual ward. But I demurred to the suggestion that the Salvation Army, and other philanthropic bodies which have established Labour Farms, should be entrusted with the power of compulsory detention which it seemed to me ought to be exercised only by the State, or at any rate by some duly constituted public authority. Civilised Governments do not farm out their prisoners; and if the liberty of the subject were entrusted to the Salvation Army, the public would think it possible that the treatment of the men might depend on the fervour of their Hallelujahs.

The inquiry of the Committee was extraordinarily complete. They examined all sorts of witnesses, official and non-official; they visited casual wards, workhouses, and prisons, as well as common lodging-houses, shelters, and kindred institutions; they inspected the Belgian Labour Colonies as well as those established in this country by religious and philanthropic societies, and their report is, what seems almost a contradiction in terms, a really interesting blue-book.

The result of their inquiries is summed up in the words quoted from Walker's "Original," that, except

during periods of general depression of trade, "there is no appreciable element of honest poverty or of penniless industry seeking work." An old writer has accurately described the tramp as "*sine re, sine spe, sine fide, sine sede.*" The material is very unpromising; the present system neither deters him, nor affords any means of reclaiming him; and a thorough change is necessary. First of all, the Committee propose to transfer the responsibility of dealing with vagrants from the Guardians to the police, as the matter is one of social order rather than of Poor Law relief, and the area and the administration of counties admit of uniformity unattainable in individual Unions. For the sake of economy the present casual wards are to be utilised; diet is to be made uniform; the tramp is to be entitled to a mid-day meal at a police station after discharge; the time, though not necessarily the description, of work in casual wards is to be the same everywhere; a task is to be universally enforced, its character being settled with regard to the physical powers of the individual; and detention for two nights is to be also universal, except in the case of men with special tickets. Such tickets are to be issued by the police to a man who can satisfy them that he has worked at some employment (other than a casual job) within a recent period, that he has ground for expecting to get work at a certain place and is likely to keep to it. Provided with this ticket, he is to be exempted from all but a very light task at the casual ward and is to be speeded on his way.

An important alteration in magisterial practice is proposed as regards punishment for vagrancy offences. At present the man who refuses to do his task in the casual ward is very often committed for three days or

a week to prison, where he need scarcely do anything at all. It is suggested, therefore, that where the offence does not appear to deserve a substantial punishment he should be discharged at once, a nominal sentence of one day being recorded against him, and measures being taken for his identification on subsequent conviction either at the same Court or elsewhere.

If repeated convictions show that a man is a habitual vagrant, he is to be sent for not less than six months, nor more than three years, to one of the Labour Colonies, which County Councils and County Boroughs are to have power to set up, or to a colony established by a philanthropic society, if certified by the Secretary of State as suitable. But much difference of opinion exists as to whether the State should thus entrust its prisoners to amateur gaolers. Anyhow, the Committee propose that the work on the Forced Labour Farms should be a reality, and not, as official witnesses admitted it to be in our existing prisons, a sham in which the labour is never hard.

With regard to women and children (of whom, as already pointed out, the whole number is very small) it is proposed that they should be lodged in workhouses instead of in the casual ward, also that the acquisition of parental rights over tramps' children by Boards of Guardians should be facilitated.

The Committee observe that between the Poor Law and the police the vagrant has flourished, that the police treat him as a criminal but do not punish him, while the Poor Law authorities treat him as a pauper but do not relieve him. They want to deal both with his mode of life and with his disinclination to do honest work; to protect the public from the trouble and the nuisance he causes; to prevent children from being

trained in his habits; and to deter others from adopting his mode of life. To secure these ends they considered that such a modification of the Swiss system as they proposed might prove effectual, and I need scarcely say that this conclusion confirmed my own opinion on the subject.

While I was specially occupied with vagrancy I took the opportunity of visiting various English prisons in order to compare the work performed with what I had seen done in casual wards as well as in Swiss gaols and Labour Farms. The life seemed to me to be a sort of organised idleness, and I found it difficult to imagine why the State, with such an enormous number of able-bodied men at its absolute disposal, should get so very little work out of them. No doubt the shortness of the majority of sentences is a great difficulty, and I was told by several Governors that if you have to deal with a succession of prisoners for about a week apiece it is very hard to get steady application to anything. They agreed in approving the suggestion that first offences of a slight character should only be punished by recording the conviction, and they considered that even if the minimum term were a fortnight it would be possible to organise prison labour on an entirely different footing.

It must be owned, however, that at Princetown, where only long-term prisoners are sent, and the work of a thousand men is habitually available, the work is ridiculously light and the cost prodigiously large, in comparison with what I found at the Swiss establishments. On my visit to the great English prison I saw what I guessed to be about a couple of hundred men, each armed with a long Cornish spade. At the sound of a whistle this was pushed a little

way into the soil, and a spoonful of earth was turned over. Exhausted by this effort the squads then stood at ease until called upon by another whistle to repeat the operation; and when I inquired how long the poor fellows slaved at this terrible toil I was informed that some of them were kept at it as much as four or five hours in the course of the twenty-four. This seemed to me to confirm the evidence of the official witness who said that hard labour in English prisons exists only in name. It is significant that no less a sum than £31,000 has been recently voted by Parliament for additional buildings at Princetown, independently of ordinary repairs, while in Switzerland all such work would be done by the men themselves. No doubt even with this feebly-applied labour a considerable area of what was waste land on Dartmoor has been brought to a state of cultivation, and by dint of the lavish expenditure of funds some fine stock has been raised, but, even without any wages bill, the farm is nothing like commercially profitable. The land has to a small extent been improved by man, but the man cannot, with the mechanical discipline which exists, have been much improved by the land. We ought to infuse more common-sense and less sentimentality into our administration, then we should find that a larger proportion than at present of the occupants of our gaols would acquire habits of steady work, and they might contribute a substantial sum towards their keep. The Prison Commissioners estimate the value of the labour of all prisoners in 1908-9 at about sixpence a-day apiece. But even this ridiculously small amount is merely paper profit, arrived at by making more or less inaccurate shots at the worth of the work done for the Prison Department itself, as well as for the

Post Office and Admiralty. The total sum realised in cash from sales of prison goods is only £20,000 a-year, or less than fivepence per head *per week*. Surely the labour of an able-bodied man ought to be worth something more than this, and if we cannot make the work of our prisoners pay for all expenses connected with them, the adverse balance need not be so enormous as to make each man cost the country something like £40 annually.[1]

The report of the Departmental Committee was generally received with much favour, and in the West of England the Guardians were almost unanimous in desiring that its recommendations should be carried into effect. I understand that it is pigeon-holed at the Home Office, where Mr Herbert Gladstone is doubtless either considering it, or considering whether he shall some day take it into consideration.

[1] The vote for the Prisons Service (including supervision and pensions), according to the Estimates for 1908-9, was £877,654. The average number of prisoners was reckoned at 21,152. This works out at about £41, 10s. per prisoner.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

EXTENSION OF SERVICE—PROGRESS IN DISTRICT—PUBLIC INQUIRIES—PLAGUE OF INSPECTORS—RETIREMENT.

It is sad to reflect how many people think that principles which they regard as admirable for others ought not to be applied to themselves. I had always considered retirement of Civil Servants at the age of sixty-five ought to be inexorably enforced on the ground that an infusion of young energy and new blood outweighs the advantage of mere experience. Besides, better men are attracted to a profession in which promotion is flowing than to one in which it is stagnant. Yet there are the stock arguments that Judges and Cabinet Ministers, Bishops and Deans, are rarely appointed to their high offices at an age much earlier than that at which a Civil Servant is held to be incapable of any longer discharging his duties. Anyhow, just as "all men think all men mortal but themselves," so I presumed to fancy that I might prove an exception to the rule of incompetence by regulation ; and when, in the spring of 1906, I received a hint that if I cared to have my service prolonged the Board might possibly ask the Treasury to give me a year or two extra, I willingly agreed. When a question has to be settled between two Departments of the State, progress is rarely rapid,

and it happened that the proceedings dragged on until the near approach of the day on which my official existence would naturally have terminated, so I was anxious to have the matter decided. Accordingly I sent a telegram to Whitehall containing only the words "Psalm xxxix. verse 5," and although I fancy that there may have been some difficulty in finding a Book of Common Prayer in a Government Department, the pathos of my request ("Let me know mine end, and the number of my days, that I may be certified how long I have to live") was recognised, and I received a letter shortly afterwards to the effect that I had been granted a two years' extension of service.

For many reasons I was grateful to Mr Burns. Like Horace, I am always meeting men who wish that their profession were something else than what it happens to be, while I on the contrary have without reservation enjoyed all my work. Indeed on two occasions I had been invited to accept much better paid appointments, which would have taken me to London, and I was rejoiced to have good reason for remaining in Devon. I believe in the old jingle—

> "Si quâ sede sedes, et sit tibi commoda sedes,
> Istâ sede sede, nec ab istâ sede recede."

It happened, too, that I had started one or two rather big things in my District and was anxious to see them through, so I was all the more pleased to defer my retirement.

On the whole, the Nursing of the Sick Poor is the branch of administration in which most progress has been made during the last dozen years. When I took charge there was not a single workhouse infirmary on

modern lines, and this want was most conspicuous in the two chief centres of population. The worst case was that of Plymouth, where, on my first visit in 1897, I had found the whole workhouse overcrowded, and the sick wards particularly wretched. The powers of the Local Government Board in such cases are so much restricted as to make it very difficult to apply compulsion, so I set to work to persuade the Guardians to build a new infirmary. They were exceedingly obstinate, but by dint of constantly worrying I induced them after two or three years to engage an architect to produce plans, which were duly submitted to the Local Government Board and received official approval. But this effort exhausted the energy of the Guardians. Nothing more was done, and a party of so-called economists persuaded them to revoke their previous resolution and to waste a good deal of money by patching and altering old buildings quite unsuited for the reception of patients. The need became more and more pressing year by year, the workhouse was so full as to make classification impossible, and one of my medical colleagues as well as the Guardians' own medical officer reported strongly as to its defects. The sick wards were ill-ventilated, ill-drained, overcrowded, and so inadequate that the inmates had sometimes to be placed in the body of the house and even to sleep in passages; and the extent of the over-crowding may be gathered from the fact that at one time a hundred and fifty-four cases were in wards which would only properly hold eighty-nine. It was not until 1905 that, after telling the Guardians in plain terms that this state of things was discreditable to the town, and was unparalleled in any other workhouse that I had ever seen, I prevailed upon them to decide on building

an excellent infirmary for about three hundred patients, and I am glad to say that I had the satisfaction of seeing its completion just about the time of my retirement.

At Exeter I had to take the same sort of matter in hand, but in more favourable circumstances. For one thing, the necessity was not quite so urgent as at Plymouth, and for another it happened that soon after coming into the District I had suggested certain alterations as regards the administration of out-relief by which I assured the Guardians that they would effect large economy without hardship to anybody. My anticipations were realised, and when they found that they were saving about £3000 a-year, I was able to put it to them that they ought to devote something like a third of that amount to the erection of a modern infirmary which would cost about £16,000, and could be paid for by a charge (for principal and interest) of about £900 a-year. They agreed, and erected a capital hospital, of which they are now justly proud.

I need not refer in detail to other cases, but I have some satisfaction in knowing that during my term of office ten new infirmaries have been opened, all efficient and well-equipped, seven others have been reconstructed, and most of the remainder have been more or less modernised, while the staff of nurses serving in them has increased from seventy-one to a hundred and thirty-one.

The condition of outdoor paupers has also been in one respect extraordinarily improved in the last few years by the organised provision of district nurses working under local societies to which the Guardians subscribe. The system is fast spreading over the

West of England, with the most beneficial results; and in Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset, County Associations are energetically promoting its further extension. The comfort of sick and helpless folk who receive the attention of a skilled nurse contrasts strikingly with the pitiable condition of those who have to depend on the irregular visits of some aged and ignorant crone. These nurses will also be invaluable upon the coming into operation of the Midwives' Act, which will make it illegal for anybody to undertake midwifery cases unless duly registered. But unless matters progress much more quickly than is the case at present, I cannot help thinking that the law will have to be broken simply because the number of registered midwives will be quite insufficient for the cases requiring them. I hope the difficulty will not be so acute as among the English residents in India, where, according to a letter (from a lady) which appeared some time ago in the *Times*, there is such a scarcity of midwives that "they are generally engaged a year deep." I am afraid that in the West of England a less prophetic turn of mind will be found.

In my farewell address to the Boards of Guardians I was able to boast that between 1897 and 1908 the general rate of pauperism in the district had fallen from 41 to 33 per thousand; that the number of outdoor paupers had in that period been diminished by 10,543, while the amount spent on outdoor relief had been reduced by £27,400 per annum, although the average allowance to each pauper had been considerably raised. Against this reduction of 10,543 outdoor paupers has to be set an increase of only 820 inmates of workhouses, etc., while the number of lunatics has risen from 3428 to 3888, and that of vagrants from 214 to 373. I was pleased to add that decent old folk, if

destitute, are never refused out-relief unless their circumstances are such that it is impracticable for them to obtain in their own homes the food, the lodging, nursing, and medical attendance which they require.

The disadvantages of bringing up children in an exclusively pauper atmosphere have been generally recognised, and all workhouse schools have been abolished. The general plan is still to lodge the children in the workhouse, and to send them out for instruction to a neighbouring school. But some of the more important Unions have placed them in Scattered Homes, which are perhaps the best imitation of family life and the least institutional institutions that have hitherto been devised. This system would be more generally adopted but for apprehensions of its costliness. Boarding-out, too, has been adopted in a good many instances, but it has not always been found easy to secure suitable homes, or to provide for the close supervision which is essential.

The West of England has not been so prolific as the Eastern counties in public inquiries as to the conduct of Poor Law officials. But I have had to hold one or two of a rather difficult character, where this or that delinquent had not been guilty of any overt act which could be formulated in a specific charge, and yet it was perfectly clear that he was constantly irritating people with whom he came in contact, was putting up the backs of all his subordinates by the manner rather than the substance of his dealing with them, and was generally provoking everybody by pure cussedness. In one case I had given the offender, who was at the head of a large establishment, several warnings, which produced only temporary amendment, and at last the Guardians applied for sanction to his dismissal. They spent a

good deal of money over it, and even retained a distinguished K.C. to represent them. The case was fought out for a couple of days, and eventually I felt able to recommend a decree of divorce on the ground of incompatibility of temper. The resignation was required, and things have gone smoothly ever since.

I had another rather awkward inquiry in which a District Medical Officer was called upon by an overseer to attend a case of severe injury, and had to explain his refusal to go. Unfortunately the order to him had not been put into writing, as required by the regulations, and he denied that it had been given verbally; moreover his wife was called as witness, and swore that she was in an adjoining room and overheard the whole of the interview with the overseer, of which she backed up her husband's version. I was sorry for her, as I do not believe that, outside the pages of novels, people are in the habit of accidentally hearing long conversations when their presence is not suspected, nor had I any reason to believe that the overseer had invented his story. Why should he? But, on the technical ground that the order had not been given in writing, the doctor had to be acquitted, though the Board did not abstain from censuring him.

Now and then I had to undertake public inquiries outside the limits of the Poor Law, including some (which appear to me to be a sad waste of time) with regard to the maintenance of highways. Under an old statute, when the County and District Councils are agreed that a main road has ceased to have that character, and that its maintenance may fairly be transferred from the county to the district, a local inspection and public inquiry on the part of the Local Government Board are necessary to give effect to the agreement. In

one of my reports I represented to the Board that in the course of a month or two I had to hold no less than three such investigations, taking up four days which I could ill spare from real work. I plaintively observed that in one of these cases (in which I had to travel a hundred and forty miles) advertisements had to be issued, a public meeting (from which the public were unanimously absent) to be held, and various busy officials to be occupied, in order to decide whether the local authorities alone concerned were wrong in considering that a back lane about two hundred and fifty yards long, of which one end had been blocked by a railway for nearly forty years, and part of which had been converted into a scavengers' yard, could not reasonably be regarded as a main road, and whether it might be maintained (to the extent demanded by its insignificance) at the expense of a District Council quite willing to assume that minute obligation. My plea for release from futilities of this sort found some response at Whitehall, and I was assured that opportunity should be taken to modify the old Act of which I complained. Whether this has yet been done, or whether there has been a slump in dismaining roads, I do not know, but I am glad to say that of late years I have had no more inquiries of the same kind.

I had one illustration of the quaint fashion in which, here and there, the English language is enriched by picturesque expressions current in particular districts. In the course of an inquiry as to the proposed division of a Somerset parish, I had occasion to ask whether many of the inhabitants of village A had been buried in the churchyard of village B. "Certainly," answered the vicar of B, who was under examination, "and

a good few of them have had anti-resurrection tombs." I was puzzled, whereupon the Vicar proceeded to explain that this was the local name for the ponderous monuments of which the weight seems to offer a special obstacle to *post-mortem* flight. I was reminded of the hero of Cherbuliez who was asked whether he intended to bury himself in the country by marriage. "Yes," he said, "but in a sarcophagus, not in a deal coffin. She is an heiress."

I have sometimes wondered at the extraordinary tolerance which people show to the system of inspection which surrounds them from the cradle to the grave. Throughout the journey of life they find an Inspector perched on every milestone. As soon as the child is ushered into the world by the legally qualified doctor, the Inspector of Registration arrives in order to see that its advent has been duly chronicled. Then follows the Inspector of Vaccination to ascertain that Dr Jenner's rite has been properly performed. Then comes the question of education, and the Inspector of School Attendance appears on the scene. One Inspector examines eyes and talks of spectacles; another examines Little Mary and talks of free breakfasts. When a modest cottage is built the Inspectors swarm. The Inspector under the local bye-laws objects to devices for economy in structure; the Inspector of Highways makes all sorts of stipulations as to roads; the Inspector of Nuisances is for ever girding at the dustbin. The victim invests his money in business, and is faced by the Inspector of Factories, who insists on the machinery being duly fenced and the hands not being overworked. If savings are placed in a colliery, up steps a new Inspector, so that any explosion may be followed by a Report. If, oppressed by too much

inspection, the wretched man takes refuge under the shadow of Bacchus, he may have to encounter an Inspector of Police, an Inspector of Inebriates, or an Inspector of Lunatic Asylums. Even after death he may not be free from inspection, for is there not the Inspector of Burial Grounds?

I must gratefully admit, that though I have belonged to an unpopular race, I have found people not merely tolerant but most friendly. I have never shaken the whip of Whitehall over their heads, nor have I adopted the formula ascribed by the late Sir F. Bramwell to certain politicians who declare that "every man shall do as he pleases, and if he does not, why, we'll make him." My general attitude has been that of helping Guardians to improve their administration by learning what has been done elsewhere in the same matter; and it has been effective to ask Union A why it should have more pauperism, or worse sick wards, or what not, than Union B, and to beg one Board to try to bring itself to the level of its neighbour. Our discussions have been thoroughly good-humoured, and though I have here and there had pretty sharp attacks, I have always taken care to show that I enjoyed them as pleasantly diversifying official routine; and no sting was left on either side, even though, in trying to temper an orator's excitement, I may have occasionally excited his temper.

Nothing could exceed the kindness with which the news of my retirement was received. Not only did many Boards of Guardians pass special resolutions of regret, but the Poor Law Conference, representing the whole District, expressed in most flattering terms their recognition of my work. Everywhere I met with marks of far more appreciation than I deserved, and I cannot

but be grateful for the good-nature with which my shortcomings were left in oblivion.

When I handed my duties over to my successor, I received a letter from the Prime Minister stating that he proposed to submit my name to the King for a Companionship of the Order of the Bath, and I felt particularly fortunate in receiving a distinction made all the more valuable by the fact that the total number of Civil C.B.'s is never allowed to exceed the mysterious figure of 302, so it often happens that men who have well earned the honour fail to obtain it for lack of vacancies. His Majesty was pleased to confer the decoration on me at an Investiture held at Buckingham Palace on the 21st July 1908.

Shortly afterwards Earl Fortescue, as Lord Lieutenant of Devon, was good enough to recommend me to the Lord Chancellor for appointment as a County Magistrate, and having in the course of my official duties performed various functions of a quasi-judicial character, I was glad in this way to continue my connection with local affairs, while I trusted that I might, in the Liturgical phrase, at any rate, "indifferently minister justice."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE WEST OF ENGLAND — EXETER CATHEDRAL — PERKIN WARBECK — A DRAMATIC SITUATION — BISHOPS AND DEANS — DEVON DIALECT — CORNISH CHARACTERISTICS.

A FRIEND of mine lately settled down at a little out-of-the-way watering-place on the Devon coast, where he found the climate balmy, living cheap, house-rent low, and golf-links excellent. But he was told that he was the thirtieth colonel who had come to live there, and he was not yet certain whether this was an advantage or a drawback. On the whole, I think he might consider himself lucky. The ancient warriors have various tastes in common, and, what are more stimulating, various subjects of dissension. They rival each other in experience of golf bunkers; shoulder their clubs and show how holes are won, and exercise the sacred right of ignoring the conventions in which bridge is so prolific,—for which indeed they would like to substitute a code of kicks under the table but for the tenderness which gout has given to their nether extremities. And they form a pleasant coterie with a fair amount of experience of the world, though with perhaps excessive confidence in the correctness of their own views, whether about Tariff Reform or the Territorial Army.

The West of England is very largely chosen by

various classes of men for their declining years, and they are quite right. Of the two chief centres of population the neighbourhood of Plymouth naturally attracts the Navy, while that of Exeter has many military officers who in the course of their career in the artillery or the line have happened to be quartered there. Newton Abbot also numbers among its residents many such veterans, perhaps because it is reputed to be the cheapest place in the West; and the builders of houses, which have appropriately been characterised as being of the Free Thought Order of Architecture, seem to have specially catered for that class. For my own part, when His Majesty had no further need for my services, I felt not the least inclination to depart from dear, delightful, dreamy Devon. It is not judicious to transplant old trees, and I had taken root in Exeter, which had been obviously the most convenient centre for the supervision of my District, and where I had found genial friends, cultivated society, good music, varied interests, and pleasant occupations. The air from the Channel on one side and from Dartmoor on the other is of the right quality to take into one's lungs. The sea is easy of access, and several golf-links are within reach. Above all, the Cathedral and the City possess never-failing attractions for anybody who cares for architecture or for history. The Cathedral would be altogether admirable if successive generations of Philistines had not taken such infinite pains to prevent its being seen either inside or out from the best point of view. At one end it is blocked by the entirely superfluous house of a canon, at the other an equally superfluous church dwarfs its proportions. Inside, perched on the rood-screen, is an organ which fills up almost all the space

to the roof and shuts out the view of a particularly fine East window. It is quite true that the screen has always carried the organ, but the musical instrument which used to go under that name was a very small affair, and an old engraving shows that instead of a heavy mass which blocks everything it consisted of a few pipes and pinnacles interrupting nothing.

Here, however, my grumble ends. The Cathedral is magnificent, with the famous Exeter pillar, that cluster of sixteen graceful shafts, which is a joy for ever. I first saw it more than thirty years ago, and one thing strongly impressed on my memory was a huge hoarding which hid the east end from view. The restoration by Sir Gilbert Scott had just taken place and a beautiful reredos had been erected, but for some obscure reason it was thought that our Protestantism might be injured by a sight of it, and it was then the subject of a lawsuit. Sectarian passions in those days ran high, for there had been actual riots in the neighbouring parish of St Sidwell, with many broken heads, in consequence of the use of the surplice in the pulpit. Nowadays the surplice is universal, and the reredos is regarded as a work of art. But an Archdeacon of the Church Militant then chose to consider it idolatrous, and appealed to Bishop Temple, in his official capacity of Visitor, to require its removal. The Bishop summoned one of Her Majesty's Judges to lay down the law of the case, and, on the advice of Mr Justice Keating, issued the Order asked for. Then there was an appeal to the Court of Arches, which decided that the reredos was illegal, but that the Bishop had no power to remove it. From this judgment there was a final reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which furnished a delightful illustration of the

glorious uncertainty of the law. For that august body held that both previous decisions were wrong, that the Bishop would have been entitled to require the removal of the reredos if illegal, but that being intended for ornament and not for worship it was legal and was not to be interfered with. From that day to this I believe that no objection has been raised to it, nor has anybody suggested it as likely to be a subject for idolatry any more than a painted window or a tomb-stone.

I have not the least intention of making this chapter a bit of diluted guide-book, but there are two or three points worth mention about Exeter Cathedral which, by the way, Freeman described as unrivalled alike in uncouthness of outline and in perfection of detail. When the see was removed from Crediton the reason expressly stated in Edward the Confessor's Charter (still in the archives) was that Exeter was a walled city and therefore safer. The two great Norman towers were originally erected to serve as fortresses against the Danes, who had an unpleasant habit of sailing their ships up the Exe and plundering the Britons. And when the Norman Cathedral was begun by Bishop Warelwast, nephew of William the Conqueror, the towers outside it were relied upon to repel attack. It was nearly a couple of centuries later that Bishop Quivil, to whom we owe the design of the present building, made them a part of it by converting one wall of each into an arch and so forming a magnificent transept. Thus the Cathedral is unequalled in length of roof unbroken from end to end, for elsewhere there is usually a dome between the line of the nave and that of the choir. Quivil had strong views as to symmetry. The nave is just 140 feet from end to end, the transepts

are the same length, so is the choir, and each tower is about 140 feet high. Then, throughout the building, although no two windows on the same side are alike, yet each corresponds with the one exactly opposite. In the tracery of many we find in different patterns the Rose and the Lily, and as we know that Quivil, being of French descent, combined the rose of England with the *fleur de lys* in the coat-of-arms which he assumed on succeeding to the Bishopric, we may fairly suppose that he carried out the same idea in designing the Cathedral.

Until a few years ago the great window at the west end, the tracery of which is singularly beautiful, was spoilt by some particularly hideous glass, bad in quality, gaudy in colour, and full of gruesome heraldic monsters taken from coats-of-arms of Devon families, who paid highly for the honour of being thus commemorated. This wonderful composition dated from the eighteenth century, when glass-staining had sunk to its lowest ebb. I had commented on its atrocities in the *Morning Post*, and at the end of 1900, when it was proposed to commemorate the achievements of the Devon Regiment in the Boer War, I suggested in a local newspaper that the opportunity should be taken to bring this discord of colour into harmony with the rest of the building. But one of the windows on the south side of the nave was chosen instead, and the question remained in abeyance. After the death of Archbishop Temple, however, the Dean and Chapter decided that the most appropriate memorial to him would be the restoration of the west window; and ample subscriptions for the purpose were quickly raised. Oddly enough, the proposal met with a storm of opposition, not apparently on the ground that the blaze of flaunting colour and the

ridiculously incongruous griffins possessed any beauty, or indeed any artistic merit, but because their manufacturer, a Yorkshire glazier named Peckitt, had left behind him so few productions that the rubbish was made valuable by its rarity. A furious correspondence took place in the *Times*, the Dean and Chapter were accused of "a chronic mania for destroying every relic of ancient art in the Cathedral," and somebody had the hardihood to declare that Temple himself had "remarked upon the brilliancy and suitability of Peckitt's window." But the Dean, in a couple of quite delightful letters, trounced his assailants so soundly as not to leave them a leg to stand on. The Chapter stuck to their guns; public opinion supported them; the new window, designed by Mr G. F. Bodley, R.A., was duly completed; and its tones are reposeful to the eye and appropriate to the grand old shrine.

The Cathedral Close suggested to me the pleasant excursion into a by-road of history where I was able to hunt down the authority for a particularly dramatic situation. Everybody knows that Perkin Warbeck (personating one of the little princes who were murdered in the Tower), after raising an army in Cornwall and making an unsuccessful attack on Exeter, was taken prisoner and brought to the Treasurer's house adjoining the Cathedral, where King Henry VII. was then lodging. But according to Bacon's History, Perkin was never taken into the King's presence, nor have later historians made any reference to a public confession there, or to his having been joined by his wife Lady Katherine Gordon, who was a cousin of the King of Scotland and reputed to be the most beautiful woman of her time. Yet in a book published some thirty years ago, entitled 'Gleanings from the Municipal and Cathedral Records rela-

tive to the History of the City of Exeter,' I found a description of a remarkably telling scene in which, in the Cathedral Close, Perkin was made to admit his imposture, not only to the King and to the Cornish rebels (in their shirts, and with halters round their necks), but also to his wife, whom Henry had sent for from St Michael's Mount. Before the whole assemblage he confessed himself to be the son of a certain foreign Jew, called Osbeck or Warbeck, and even described the way in which he had obtained the information that had persuaded James of Scotland and Margaret of Burgundy to recognise him as their relation and to support his claim. On this King Henry made a pretty speech to Lady Katherine, complimenting her in a rather embarrassing fashion on her charms, and condoling with her for having been deceived by such a contemptible fellow. Next, Lady Katherine, who seemed previously to have had no doubt as to her husband's being the real Duke of York, burst into a torrent of tears, which only made her look more beautiful, but as soon as she recovered her self-possession she roundly abused him. "After," she cried, "you desired, O most perfidious of men, to deceive me with your false stories, why did you allure me from my house, my home, my parents and friends, to bring me into hostile hands? Alas for miserable me! What can I look for except death, now that my honour is gone? Why have I not here one of my kin who would take vengeance on thee? Villain! are these the sceptres which you promised me! Wretch! is this the royal honour wherewith you boasted that our race should be adorned?" Then she threw herself on the mercy of the King, who not only promised her his royal protection, but extended his pardon to the rebels, who

had been shivering in their shirts as spectators of the scene.

All this was delightfully dramatic, but was it true? The Gleanings gave no reference to any authority, and the Town-Clerk informed me that Mr Stuart A. Moore who had calendared the Municipal and Cathedral Records could give no clue, and believed the story to be apocryphal. Moreover Ford, the Devon dramatist, whose "Perkin Warbeck" has been characterised (I think by Mr Swinburne) as the best historical play since the days of Shakespeare, makes Lady Katherine believe in her husband to the end, and there is a fine passage in which, on his execution, she vows eternal fidelity to his memory. Yet if the story had been known to Ford he would surely have seized on such a striking situation as that of a wife who learns for the first time, in such surroundings, that her husband is not a King nor she a Queen. After fruitlessly worrying everybody whom I thought likely to throw light on the subject, I wrote to *Notes and Queries*, telling the whole tale, but with no better success.

Finally, when I had almost given up the search in despair, Professor Walter J. Harte, of the Royal Albert Memorial College, Exeter, who had interested himself in the matter, found the original in the '*Historia Regis Henrici Septimi a Bernardo Andrea Tholosate conscripta*,' edited by James Gairdner, Rolls Series 1858. It seems that Andrea or André was a blind friar of Toulouse, who was appointed Poet Laureate and Historiographer by Henry VII., and whom Gairdner regards as standing unrivalled as a contemporary authority. It is curious that his account of the proceedings at Exeter should have remained in oblivion until printed in the Rolls Series in the middle of the

nineteenth century, and should have apparently lain buried there until the present time.

Most of our Exeter Bishops have left behind them some good things which still float about in the air. I suppose Philpotts has never been surpassed in this particular, for his tongue was always ready. Even in his undergraduate days, when he was called on at supper to "sing a song or tell a story," he declared, "I cannot sing; so if I must tell a story I will say that I should like to hear Jones sing that song again,"—Jones's performance having been terribly out of tune. Of the Devon traditions one of the best is his answer to a squire with whom he was staying, and who had been perpetually worrying him as to a mansion just built, with an artificial lake in the foreground. "Can you suggest any improvement?" asked his host. "Well," said the Bishop, "if it were mine, I should pull down the house and fill up the pond with it. That would remove two objections." And the Bishop had a way of ending a controversy which was not pleasant for his opponents,—by saying that he would pray for them. "Do not be so uncharitable," said one of the sufferers. Temple, too, was credited with many caustic sayings, among them being his answer to a lady who told him that her aunt had been prevented from sailing in a ship which had foundered with all on board, and who asked whether the Bishop did not consider this a Providential interposition. "I cannot say: for I did not know your aunt," was the reply. After him came Bickersteth, author of the hymn which obtained a special celebrity when "Peace, perfect peace—From the Appendix," was announced at the time of a notable operation for appendicitis. Of him, too, some stories are told; but the jests of one generation become the chestnuts of

another, and I fear that most of these episcopal jokes are now fit only for stuffing turkeys or for filling a costermonger's barrow.

There is a tradition of a Rural Dean who complained that while an Archbishop was Most Reverend, a Bishop was Right Reverend, and a Dean was Very Reverend, holders of his own office were left without any particular mark of honour. "Why should you not be called Rather Reverend?" was the suggestion. The same sort of question occurs weekly in connection with the Bidding Prayer which is made to precede Sunday morning's sermon in the Cathedral. By what seems to laymen to be rather an invidious distinction, the Archbishop is "Randall, by Divine Providence," and the Bishop of Exeter is "Archibald, by Divine Permission," while the Bishop Suffragan is ignored altogether. "By Divine Toleration" would be appropriate to a descending scale, but might seem wanting in appreciation of the excellent holder of the office.

I have hinted at our Dean's powers as a combative letter-writer in the style of Junius, and perhaps he will pardon me for giving an illustration of his lighter wit in the same direction. Some function in the Cathedral was to take place in connection, I think, with a Meeting of the British Medical Association, and the Local Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society had applied for twenty tickets. The Dean regretted that the demand was so great that he was unable to satisfy the claims of the Society, but he promised to do what he could if tickets should become a Drug in the market.

Some of the members of the Chapter too have an abundant sense of humour, and one of them in preaching to the Institute of Journalists took for his text the words, "He charged them that they should tell no man,

but the more He charged them so much the more a great deal they published it." Had this particular Canon been in residence at the time of the great meeting of the Doctors already mentioned, I imagine that his text would have been, "A certain woman suffered many things of many physicians." When there was a vacancy a short time ago somebody asked, "Will the new member of the Chapter be High, Low, or Broad?" "I do not much care," said a suffering member of the congregation, "if only he is not long." And fortunately he was not.

A pleasant wit is sometimes to be found now and then couched in the broadest dialect. When a landlord was holding his annual rent dinner he made a sympathetic speech as to one of his farmers who had lately lost his wife. The farmer in returning thanks expressed his gratitude, but at the same time observed, "But as for my old 'ooman, her was a teasin' old twoad, and the Lard be welcome to she." And I heard from a gardener as to one of my pear-trees, "If her 'd been tackled to rights, her 'd never had wented where she's a-gone." Now and then one is tempted to believe that the instruction of the village schools does not go far. When a girl of eighteen was asked whether she would like to go out to New Zealand at high wages as a servant, she refused on the ground that she would not be able to bear the cold. It was explained to her that the climate was very much the same as that of England, but she persisted in her view on the ground that "All the frozen meat comes from there." A schoolgirl was asked by the Diocesan Inspector what became of Adam and Eve when they were turned out of the Garden of Eden. "Please, sir, they went into the workhouse," was the reply, showing clearly the rustic notion of the

fate of folk who come to grief. In another case a mother, imbued with orthodox opinions as to future punishment, came quite seriously to a lady responsible for the Sunday School in order to complain that her child was taught that there was "No 'ell." And it turned out that the ground for this supposed destruction of her cherished beliefs was that the children had been singing a carol with the chorus—

> "No-el, No-el,
> Born is the King of Israel."

This happened in my own parish as lately as last Christmas, and I can vouch for the truth of the story.

Will book-learning abolish dialect? A Devon schoolmaster not long ago complained to his Committee that his teaching was much hindered by parents who ridiculed the children for aping their betters when they talked good grammar instead of bad. Everybody knows that the West-country labourers and even the yeomen habitually violate the first rules of syntax in a fashion calculated to make Lindley Murray turn in his grave. I have been told (though possibly this is an invention) that in a churchyard on the border of Dartmoor is an epitaph embracing in two short lines the chief topsy-turveydoms that are to be heard there every day, but which strike curiously on the ear of a stranger—

> "Her shall not return to we,
> But us hopes to go to she."

And it is clear that the schoolmaster who stickles for nominatives and accusatives in the proper places will find it hard to adapt the old bottles to the new wine. After all, one is inclined to sympathise with the sturdy country-folk who object to the obliteration of the char-

acteristics of their race. It would be sad if the language of Mr Eden Philpotts's moor-men should become unintelligible to a future generation. Yet when a cock crew while an Inspector of Education was trying to discover whether the school children knew any natural history, he regarded them as little better than idiots because to his question, "What made that noise?" he received the reply, "Her's a stag,"—"stag" being the common term in Devon for a cock. Probably Lecky was right in considering that most of our elementary education is too largely and too ambitiously literary. The farmers indeed think there is too much of it altogether, and declare that if we had spent as much money on top-dressing as on schooling, the country would be better off. And when much talk was heard about "unearned increment," a notion went abroad that it was a proposal for the grant of free manure.

A marked difference exists between the Devon Saxons and the Cornish Celts, though they are both very lovable folk. It is astonishing to mark how completely the two tribes have kept apart through the ages. They are separated by a river which even at its mouth is not very broad, and which in its upper course a man may cross not much more than ankle-deep. Yet the two races are distinct in appearance, in language, in habits of mind, and in ways of living. They do not blend well and seldom inter-marry. The Devonians are solid, trustworthy, slow. They are not readily receptive of new ideas, and prefer a deliberate speaker to a fluent one. "His tongue be terrible well hung," was the comment on a quick talker whose words had produced only the vaguest impression; and I have heard it said that if you want to get a notion into a Devon audience it is well to repeat it, perhaps with some variety of

phrase, at least three times. The Cornishmen, on the other hand, possess quickness of apprehension and a ready wit, but are not without some drawbacks, though I should not think of adopting the opinion of one of the most scholarly and patriotic of their race as to one quality which he declared specially to belong to them. He had broken out into an enthusiastic laudation of Cornwall and its inhabitants. They were handsome, they were virtuous, they were sober, they were shrewd, and in fact I understood him to credit them with all the good qualities under the sun. "Then have you no vices at all?" I asked. "Yes," he answered reluctantly, "we have one. We are such awful liars." I should myself have never gone further than to suggest that, as Cherbuliez says of sportsmen, the memory of a Cornishman is a magnifying-glass. They all exaggerate, but in good faith. Yet this was one of their own prophets. Perhaps he was exaggerating.

I hold myself unlucky in not having come to the West until after the time of William Hicks of Bodmin, enshrined in public memory as the chief of Cornish humourists. I have never heard that he wrote anything, though his stories are still repeated throughout the country. Some of them were collected by Mr W. F. Collier in a little pamphlet of thirty pages, published at Plymouth a score or so of years ago, but they lose from the coldness of print, and from the impossibility of reproducing adequately the dialect in which Hicks was a proficient. I am afraid, therefore, that the following specimens will only imperfectly convey a notion of his humour.

One dark night Hicks was driving along when he came upon two men on the roadside. One was drunk and the other was sober, and the drunken man was

reproaching himself for his bad conduct. He was groaning out, "Ah, too bad! too bad! what shall I do? If I was called to my last account what should I zay?" The sober man replied, "Zay? What could 'e zay? Zay you've a-bin to Liskeard a-auditing of accounts and took a extra glass. 'Twill be overlooked for once. 'Tis no good telling lies up there." But the drunken man still lamented, "Too bad! too bad!" and refused to be comforted. Hicks met the sober man a day or two afterwards, and asked what had become of his friend. The answer was, "He's a very affectionate man to his family, and when he got home he took the babby out of the cradle for to kiss 'un, and velled vore with 'un upon a vuzzy vaggot [bundle of furze used for firing]. Jane her got into a passion and laid to 'un with the broom-stick while he kep 'uggin of the babby. When I comed away her'd a-thrashed 'un zober, and they'd got the chield, naked and screeching, on the dresser, a-pickin' out the prickles."

Perhaps, however, his most famous anecdote was one which he professed to have heard from the foreman of a jury which tried a doctor for poisoning an old lady. "Us was shut up without vire nor candle and nothing to ate nor drink, and it was that dark I couldn't zee the jury, but I knowed zum of them by their voice. Zo I thought I'd get the verdick of 'em, one after the other. And hearin' Jones's voice I zed to 'un, 'Mr Jones,' zed I, 'what do you think of these ere caze?' He zes, 'I be vor shuttin' of it op. If a 'ave killed the old 'ooman, I know of two he'th a-zaved from drowning, and if you draws one against the other I bean't for hangin' of 'un.' 'That's one,' zes I. Then I axes the next, 'What is your opinion of these ere caze?' He zed, 'These here doctors be too frolicsome with their

lauderdums and their doldrums. If a 'ave mit wi' a misfortune wi' the old 'ooman, I'm agin hangin' 'un.' Zo I zes to the next, 'Winnick,' zes I—but thinking the voreman to the jury didn't ought to call a man by his nickname ["winnick" is Cornish for a cheat]—'Mr Brown,' zes I, callin' of him by his right name afterwards, 'what do you think of these 'ere caze?' He zes, 'I be for givin' of him three months in the Sheriff's Ward.' 'Oh,' zes I, ''tis neck or nothing.' 'Then,' zes he, 'I'm for nothing.' The next man to he, when I axed him, zed, 'I be for givin' of it agin the rabbit and onions. No old 'ooman should ate rabbit and onions afore her goes to bed. If it didn't kill her it oughter.' [An expert had given medical evidence as to the contents of the stomach, and had admitted in his evidence that the smell of arsenic was like the smell of onions. So the jury were somewhat confused as to the respective merits of onions and arsenic.] Then I axed the next man, and he answered, 'If us hang 'un it wan't bring the old 'ooman to life again.' 'That's right,' zed I, 'that never struck me before,' and I put 'un down as agin hangin'. After he, I axed Robinson. I allus shall respect that man; he spoke out like a man; he zes, zes he, 'Just as you please, Voreman, hang 'un or no, 'tain't a happenny odds to me.' That was zix, and one more of the zame opinion made zeven, and the majolity carr'd it agin the minolity and us gave the prisoner the benefits of the doubts."

Here is a specimen of oratory which I think appeared in Mr Quiller-Couch's *Cornish Magazine* (of which I heartily regret the premature demise). The Chairman of the Parish Council *loquitur*:—

"What, you keep us here till nine at night and then cast the town drains in our teeth! You keep us here

ploughing the sands and then you drag in that everlasting red herring and expect us to swallow it. You rake up a motion that was carried *non compos* at the last meeting and away you go into the drains causing unnecessary friction. 'Twont do; 'tis too barefaced to hold water. 'Tis this sort of thing as makes people say as half this Council does nothing at all while the other half does all the work, whereas 'tis just the reverse."

It is curious that while nonconformity has for generations flourished exceedingly in Cornwall, a large proportion of the Parish Churches affect a particularly high ritual. In some of them may be seen birettas, albs, and vestments of the most gorgeous character; and I have even noticed a magnificent brooch, apparently fastening nothing, in the small of the back of a priest officiating in the midst of clouds of incense. I must say that the people seem attracted by this advanced ritual, and the congregations are often large and hearty. Now and then, however, an Incumbent finds himself with a following of only half a dozen or so, and I was staying at a seaside village where, outside the tourist season, this was the case. A dramatic scene occurred, for when the offertory was being collected the clergyman appealed to his hearers to place their contributions in the red bag, since he was never able to get any account of the receipts from the gentleman with the green bag. Whereupon the bearer of the green bag flung it dramatically down on the aisle, and stalked out of the church. I fear that the number of resident churchmen may in this way have been diminished by about one-sixth.

It was at a christening hereabouts that the officiating minister was puzzled by hearing, in response to "Name this child," a murmur of "One Simus." "Simon?" he

inquired in a stage whisper. "No, sir, One Simus—it's a Scripture name." And only after reflection it dawned on him that "Onesimus" was intended. I was also present when his curate, reading the verse of a psalm out of an old Prayer-book with long s's, startled the congregation by announcing that "the Minstrels go before; the Fingers follow after."

Of late years Cornwall seems to have specially attracted our novelists, who have perhaps been taught by Mr Quiller-Couch that it contains a race in many respects different from the "foreigners" who inhabit the rest of England. Not only in men but also in scenery, in names, and indeed in most points, it is remarkably individual. It abounds in contrasts. We see curious relics of remote antiquity close to the chief establishment of wireless telegraphy, ruined villages and thriving seaports, cruel cliffs and placid coves, roaring seas and rippling brooks, the ruggedness of granite rocks and the glory of golden gorse and purple heather. Where else will you find such surnames as Pennycomequick and Cobbledick, or such Christian names as Resignation, Admonition, or Anathema Maria? Where else will you happen upon one village called Grumbla and another known as Drunkards All, upon a hamlet of Tower Hill and a tithing of London Apprentice? Where else, except perhaps in Brittany, will the hagiologist meet with such saints as St Tudy, St Cuby, St Uny, St Enodoc, St Brioc, St Fimbarrow, and a hundred more whose canonisation dates from dim antiquity? For a winter climate, what can beat Falmouth with its magnificent river, or Penzance with St Michael's Mount towering up across the Bay? What can be more attractive than St Ives with its big fleet of red-sailed fishing-boats, and its tangle of old crooked

streets which even the colony of artists who have settled there have not exhausted in seeking studies of the picturesque?

Again, for the sea fisherman, for the botanist, for the geologist, where is to be found a better hunting-ground than at—— But it suddenly occurs to me that I am not writing either an advertisement for the railway companies or a popular guide-book; so here I content myself, in closing this record of some mixed memories, by expressing my conviction that the West of England is at any rate a rich grazing-ground for the official hack who is turned out to grass.

INDEX.

Achensee, 102
Acland, Sir T., 277
Adrian, A. D., 206
Adulteration, 162-6, 202
Agriculture, Board of, 240
Alföld, The, 173
Ammergau Passion Play, 70-5
Amsterdam Riots, 133
Appenzell Parliament, 316-320
Arcachon, 304
Aschrott, Dr P. F., 205
Athanasian Creed, 35

Bancrofts, The, 60
Barmaid Show, 28
Barton, J. & A., 297
Basing, Lord, 56, 202
Bathurst, Hon. W. L., 4
Bayly, C. V., 17
"Blackguard," Origin of, 3
Boarding-out, 289, 360
Bologna, 315
Bossons, Glacier des, 76, 94
Brabazon Society, 230, 286
Bramontier, 305
Bramwell, Lord, 161
Brassai, Professor, 175
Browne, Bishop, 191
Buckingham, Duke of, 46
Budapest, 171
Buffaloes, 178
Burns, John, 1
Byron, Lord, 18

Capuchin, The, 88
Carpathians, 188, 191
Cattle-plague, 23
Chance, Sir W., 345
Cholera, 148, 213-221
'Church and the Land,' The, 137
Claret Vineyards, 294
Coleridge, Lord Chief-Justice, 161
'Columbus, Life of,' 26
Cornish Characteristics, 378-384
Cottle Church, 24
'Cricketers in Council,' 36
Cristallo, Monte, 108
Cross, Viscount, 159

Davos, 309
Davy, J. S., 206, 242, 345
De Lesseps, F., 171, 186
Delibes, 186
Desclée, A., 58
Devon Dialect, 376
De Windt, H., 262
Dilke, Sir Charles, 148, 195, 208
Disinfection, 44, 213
Dobschau, 192
"Dog's-nose," 222
Domesday Book, 55
Douglas, Lord F., 115
Dufferin, Earl of, 304

Eastern Poor-Law District, 223-235
Edward the Seventh, King [*see* Wales, Prince of]
Eels in London Water, 153-158
Egerton, Hon. S., 67
Elberfeld Relief System, 119-127
Elöpatak, 176
'Encyclopædia Britannica,' The, 168
Engadin, The, 87
'English Poor-Law System,' The, 204
Essex Labourers, 240
Exeter, 358, 367-376

Fawcett, H., 158
Fechter, C., 59
Fenian Outrages, 196-9
Finsteraarhorn, 77

Fleming, B., 331
Fleming, H., 54
Florence, 311-314
Fowler, Sir H., 223, 231, 235
Froude, J. A., 8
Frou-frou, 58

Gipsies (Hungarian), 182
Gironde, The, 294
Goschen, Lord, 49, 195
Gott, Bishop, 77
Granville, Earl, 13
Gravesend, Mayor of, 65
Greek Church, The, 177
Greville, Charles, 3
Guardians, Boards of (unreformed), 235; (chairmen), 236; (administration), 266-270; (disorderly), 272; (blunders), 275; (women), 290

Hall, S. C., 167
Harcourt, Sir W., 159
Harness, Rev. W., 16
Harrison, Sir E., 19, 21
Helps, Sir Arthur, 5-24
Hicks, William, 379
High Sheriffs, 21
Hill, Miss Octavia, 126
Hotel-books, 113
Houghton, Lord, 305
Hungary, 171-194

Ice-cave, 191
Imbeciles, 278-283
Imseng, Pfarrer, 80
Influenza, 212
Irving, Sir H., 59

Japanese Sanitary Commissioner, 152
Jews, Hungarian, 184
Johnston, M. M., 299, 306

Kemble, Fanny, 17
Kimberley, Earl of, 237
Kingsbridge Workhouse, 278
Klausenburg, 175

Labour Yards, 239
Lafite, Château, 297
Lambert, Sir John, 52-6
Laureateship, Claim to, 254
Lech Valley, 70
Leighton, Sir F., 69
Leighton, W., 261
Léoville, Château, 297
Local Government Board (creation of), 49; (reorganisation), 195; (explosion at), 196
Loch, C. S., 204
Lochmatter, A., 94
Long, Walter, 161, 240, 273
Lowe, R., 41, 54

Macartney, T. J., 254
Margarine Act, 202
Margate, 143
Marlborough College, 131
Matterhorn Accident, 97
Mayr, Joseph, 73, 75
Médoc Champagne, 301
Metropolitan Board of Works, 201
Metropolitan Water (eels in mains), 153-8; (purchase), 159, 161
Moore, A. W., 98
Murray, R. F., 260

Nagai, K., 152
Notification of Disease, 149-151

Owen, Sir Hugh, 200, 223, 241
Oysters, 306-8

Palmerston, Viscount, 9-12
Pell, Albert, 267
Persia, Shah of, 132
Petöfi, 187
Phylloxera, The, 296
Pietra dura, 69
Plymouth, 357
Ponsonby, J. H., 36
Ponsonby-Fane, Sir S., 37
Pontresina, 87
Porter's Knot, 58
Preston-Thomas, H. (appointment to Privy Council Office), 2; (transfer to Public Health Department), 47; (to Local Government Board), 48; (appointment as Inspector for Eastern District), 223; (South-Western District), 250; (extension of service), 355; (retirement), 364
Prisons, 323, 353
Privy Council Office, 1-49
Public Health System (Privy Council as Central Department), 40; (appointment of John Simon), 40; Robert Lowe), 41; (confusion of authorities), 43; (cholera), 46; (Royal Sanitary Commission), 47; (merged in Local Government Board), 48-9; (Acts of

1872 and 1875), 52; (Vaccination Acts), 56; (organisation), 141; (medical inspectors), 143; (Margate), 143; (Sanitary Survey), 147-8; (notification of disease), 149; (influenza), 212; (cholera precautions), 213-217; (quarantine abolished), 220
Pulszki, C., 189

Quarantine, 215, 220-1

Reeve, Henry, 14
Ritchie, Lord, 201
Rivers Pollution Act, 52
Road Inquiries, 361
Robertson, T., 60
Robson, F., 58
Rotton, Sir J. F., 47
Royal Academy, 67
Royal College of Physicians, 218

Sandringham, 146
Sauterne, 302
Scattered Homes for Children, 289
Schmecks, 188
Scott, Clement, 60
Sidgwick, Prof. H., 204
Simon, Sir John (Medical Officer of Privy Council), 40; (of Local Government Board), 51; (vaccination), 56; (resignation), 57
Small-pox Hospitals, 149
South-Western District, 266-294, 355-366
Stansfeld, James (First President of Local Government Board), 49; (friction), 51; (Public Health Act), 52
Stein Alp, 82
Switzerland (Choral Festival), 117; (Appenzell Referendum), 316; (vagrancy), 335-341
Symonds, J. A., 310

Tatra, 188
Taylor, Tom, 43
Thorne, Sir R. T., 217
Toys for Pauper Children, 207
Tramp's Experiences, A, 322-331
Trent Affair, 20
Tyndall, Professor, 78, 89
Tyrol, 100

Vaccination (Act of 1871), 56; (bogus statistics), 167; ('Encyclopædia Britannica'), 168; (Dr Russel Wallace and Royal Commission), 169
Vagrancy Committee, 344-354
Victoria, Queen, 34, 35
Viola, Val, 89-93

Wales, H.R.H. the Prince of (illness), 51; (on preventable disease), 51; (on aged poor), 242
Wales, H.R.H. the Princess of (at Marlborough College), 131
Wallace, Dr A. R., 169
Waterspout, 173
Watkin, Sir E., 66
Welsh Literature, 263
Wharton, J. L., 345
Williams-Wynn, Sir W., 198
Wiry Sal, 59
Witzwyl, 338
Workhouses (inspection of), 224; (in Eastern District), 227; (visitors to), 231; (children), 233; (medical officers), 234; (married couples), 238; (classification), 243; (in South-Western District), 278; (imbeciles), 278-284; (inmates), 284-8; (dietaries), 292
"Work-shy," The, 343

Yquem, Château, 303-4

Zichy, Count, 189

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.

6 H400A 14

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
305 De Neve Drive - Parking Lot 17 • Box 951388
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1388
Return this material to the library from which it was borrowed.

University of California, Los Angeles
L 005 489 454 8
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 415 483 7

Unive
Sou
Li